For 4–6 players, levels 4–6

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Ravenloft®

Official Game Adventure

The Awakening

TSR

THE AWAKENING

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INTRODUCTION

Even such is time, that takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust;
Lo in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wander'd all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days:
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My god shall raise me up, I trust.

–Sir Walter Raleigh

Laid to rest in dark tombs and deep crypts, the dead wait patiently for the gods to call them back to life. Dust settles on the stone lids of their sarcophagi, the masonry of their tombs begins to crumble, and the earth shifts above them, hiding their final resting places. Embalmed, laid to rest, and accompanied by all they held dear in life, the dead listen for the whispered calls of their gods.

Woe to the grave robber who desecrates their tombs! Woe to the poor wretch who stumbles across one of their resting places, disturbing their slumber! Horrible curses will follow in that unfortunate's footsteps like a foul breath of evil from beyond the grave!

This adventure chronicles the slow awakening of an ancient, undead creature that becomes steadily more powerful as the adventure proceeds: Sachmet. A former high priestess of a self-centered goddess who is drawn into a world she does not understand, Sachmet lashes out at guilty and innocent alike. There is only one way to stop her, and it is fraught with all of the dangers that lie beyond the grave.

For the Dungeon Master

The Awakening is set in Nova Vaasa, one of the domains in the Core of the RAVENLOFT® campaign setting. It is designed for a party of four to six characters of 4th to 6th level. The party should include a thief and a cleric with the ability to heal disease and remove curses.

The Dungeon Master (DM) will find background information on the domain and the castle of its lord in the new RAVENLOFT *Campaign Setting* box. Other useful sources include the *Monstrous Manual* and the RAVENLOFT appendices of the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®, which provide important information on the monsters encountered in this adventure. Several of the magical items and spells used in this adventure are described in the *Tome of Magic* source book. Supplemental information on the goddess Bast can be found in the *Legends and Lore* source book (2108).

The Awakening relies heavily on the use of curses. Ideas for tailoring a curse can be found in the *Realm of Terror* rule book in the aforementioned RAVENLOFT boxed set.

Story Background

Centuries ago, on a distant world in the Prime Material Plane, Sachmet—a high priestess of the goddess Bast—was laid to rest. Her tomb was a natural rock formation 14 miles long that resembled a reclining cat. Followers of Bast carefully contoured it and completed it with secret tunnels and chambers to hold the dead.

Priestesses of Bast were usually of good alignment with chaotic tendencies, enjoying the giving of pleasure as much as the taking of it. Sachmet, however, tended toward a more neutral outlook—good and evil were immaterial, as long as she found a particular action pleasurable. The pleasure or pain of others, especially those who did not worship Bast, was of lesser importance.

Sachmet and her priestesses followed only two laws: Fight the god Set and destroy his minions (snakes) whenever encountered, and protect and venerate all cats.

One day, Sachmet was called upon to punish a man who had angered Bast by killing a cat.

She decided the punishment must fit the crime. The man had caused the cat great pain, so he would also suffer greatly. Using her ability to shapechange into a giant cat, Sachmet killed the man slowly, scratching him a little at a time with her claws and battering him about like a mouse.

In the process, the high priestess discovered that it gave her great pleasure to cause others pain. She began to indulge her pleasure with ever-increasing frequency, at first inflicting injury only upon followers of Set or upon those who had harmed a cat. Gradually her thirst for victims grew. Soon the people of Bubastis, the city which was the center of Bast's cult, trembled in fear whenever a sacred cat crossed their path. If they accidentally brushed against it, or even looked at it in a manner the priestesses considered insulting, they knew they were doomed to become Sachmet's bloody playthings.

It was during Sachmet's lengthy tenure as high priestess that work on the tomb which would one day house her body was begun. It gave Sachmet pleasure to see the giant statue speedily take shape, and hundreds of Bubastis's citizens were worked to death to carve and smooth its outer surface. Inside, stone masons fashioned cunning traps and secret passages while artists painted the walls. Their secrets died with them, in the dark.

As the tomb neared completion, the families of those who had died appealed to the followers of Set for aid, and that secret society quietly and efficiently arranged Sachmet's death. The next time Sachmet chose a man to "play with" in her private chambers, she unwittingly picked Kematef, a priest of Set who had been instructed to call attention to himself by harming one of the sacred cats. Kematef, whose teeth had been hollowed out, pretended to seduce Sachmet and then bit her neck, injecting her with a deadly poison. Because Set was a more powerful deity than Bast, Sachmet could not be cured—she died before nightfall.

Sachmet was carefully embalmed and laid to rest in the unfinished tomb, but the servants of Set were not finished with her. To prevent Sachmet from rising from her tomb, they placed a minor artifact—the *staff of Set*—at the entrance of the tomb, effectively forcing Sachmet into an eternal slumber and sealing her inside.

As Set's minions crept away, a mist began to rise around the giant statue. All through the night it deepened. The next morning, when the mist cleared, Sachmet's tomb had vanished without trace.

The statue was deposited in the Ravenloft world as the domain of Nova Vaasa was forming. It wound up in the domain's northwest corner, broken in two. Also, the mists transformed the statue, giving it a weathered and ancient appearance. It became so disfigured that none of the inhabitants of Nova Vaasa recognized it as anything but a natural rock formation. To them, these were simply a pair of oddly shaped bluffs jutting out of the plain. They named them the Koshka Bluffs, never dreaming what lay inside. Over the years, the bluffs were quarried as a source of building material. They lay within territory controlled by the Hiregaard family and were worked under the supervision of Sir Tristen Hiregaard.

Recently, strange items began to turn up in the quarry rubble. Tiny ceramic statues, cat-shaped coffins, a peculiar shield, and a strange snake-headed staff were among the many oddities uncovered. Sir Hiregaard, thinking the staff a fitting gift for his liege, Prince Othmar, sent it to the royal estate in the capital city of Kantora. But along the way, the shipment fell victim to bandits.

There are odd problems plaguing the domain. In particular, the cats of Nova Vaasa are behaving strangely indeed. . . .

The Domain of Nova Vaasa

Nova Vaasa is a fairly large domain, roughly 55 miles wide and 70 miles long. The tortured mountains of Darkon (formerly of Arak) form the northern border, while Hazlan lies to the south. To the west lie the domains of Tepest and Barovia, and the mysterious Shadow Rift. To the east lies nothing but the Mists.

The Lord: Malken, the alter ego of Sir Hiregaard, is the lord of Nova Vaasa. The character is less active in his role as lord of the domain than most of his counterparts, and the realm seems less evil than most because of that (see page 27 for more details).

The Land: The vast majority of Nova Vaasa is covered by rolling grasslands. The grasses that grow wild here come in a variety of colors, shapes, and sizes. There are lush expanses of deep green, knee-high grass, waving fields of chest-high grass that the sun has bleached to a pale yellow, grasses whose seeds give the tips of the stalks a purplish hue, pale green grasses whose leaves make the softest of bedding, and patches of brown grass with leaves so sharp that it's commonly known as "razorgrass."

Through these grasslands range herds of wild horses. In fact, Nova Vaasa is known for its equine bloodlines; some of the finest racing horses in all of Ravenloft come from this domain. Aside from capture by humans, the only dangers these herds face are the occasional poisonous snake or the hungry plains cat—an animal whose unusual midnight-black pelt and stealthy approach make it a creature to be feared and respected (see page 62).

The land slopes gradually from the Balinok Mountains in the west to Nova Vaasa's misty eastern border. Across its grasslands flow three major rivers: the Ivlis River (and its tributary the Volgis), the Borchava River (and its tributary the Little Borchava), and the Dnar River.

The grasslands are broken by small patches of forest no more than a mile wide. These dense growths are the lairs of small packs of wolves who occasionally venture out onto the plains to hunt. Because the wood from these trees rots quickly and is thus of little commercial value, the forests have been left standing. Few venture into them, for they are said to be the lairs of werewolves and bandits.

The only other features to break up the otherwise flat terrain are three large lakes (known as the "three sisters") in the southwestern corner of the domain, and three large mesas of rock that rise 2,000 feet above the plain. From these rocky bluffs are quarried the granite stones that are used to build lordly castles and merchant halls. (One of the northern mesas contains Sachmet's tomb.)

Fully a quarter of Nova Vaasa's land, primarily along the riverbanks, is devoted to farming. Grains such as wheat, oats, and rye are the principal crops. The fields are surrounded by low stone walls, built of rocks dug from the stony ground. The peasant farmers live in round huts with walls of stone and thatched roofs. Only the wealthiest farmers can afford expensive, imported wood for doors.

Here and there throughout the grasslands, roofless stone huts lie in rough circles surrounded by low stone walls. These are the long-forgotten homes of families who tried to carve new farmland from the whispering grasslands. Tumbled walls of stone mark the borders of long-abandoned fields.

Kantora, the domain's major city, lies near the center of the domain. It has a population of 16,000, mostly peasants who have been driven from their lands by exorbitant taxes. They live under squalid conditions, in hovels built in the shadows of the mighty homes of merchants, tax collectors, and petty nobles. A host of gambling houses and taverns have sprung up to ease their misery—and to deplete their already-light pouches.

The domain also has two other cities: Liara, with a population of about 8,000, and Bergovitsa, with a population of about 7,000. Two smaller towns (Arbora and Egertus) lie at the ends of the trading roads that follow the rivers. Each has a population of about 2,000.

The Folk: Although the land is rich, the vast majority of Nova Vaasa's people are poor. A small aristocracy extorts exorbitant taxes from the people, to the point where many farmers have had to give up ownership of their land. They are then faced with the unpleasant choices of either continuing to work as tenant farmers on the fields they once owned or moving to the city to scrape out a living in unfamiliar surroundings.

The peasants of Nova Vaasa dress in plain brown clothing that is often stained with the dirt of the fields and heavily patched. The men wear loose shirts of coarsely woven homespun, with rolled up sleeves, and heavy cotton trousers. The women wear blouses and divided skirt-pants that allow those wealthy enough to own a horse to ride. Most peasants are barefooted; only a handful of them wear boots.

The men of Nova Vaasa take pride in their moustaches, letting them grow long and bushy, and waxing the tips into tight curls. "A man without a moustache is like a horse without a tail," is a popular saying. Women wear their hair long, in a simple braid at the back.

The only decoration ever seen on peasant clothing is a brightly colored scarf, worn loosely tied around the neck (men) or over the hair (women). Exquisitely embroidered, these scarves are passed down through generations and worn only on special occasions. At other times, a plain scarf is worn and is used for wiping the brow or covering the mouth against dust. Bandits are nicknamed after the color of the scarves used to hide their faces.

A small aristocracy of five families rules Nova Vaasa. Four of the families (the Hiregaards, the Chekivs, the Rivtoffs, and the Vistins) live in castles on the grasslands and have the right to tax the peasants who live along the Dnar, Little Borchava, Volgis, and Ivlis rivers respectively. Each family pays tribute to the fifth family, the Bolshniks, who live in a castle in Kantora and control the Borchava River farmlands. Prince Othmar Bolshnik is the political leader of the domain. He commands both a city militia and a cavalry that patrols the grasslands.

The nobles of Nova Vaasa dress in elaborate costumes whose colors are a brilliant contrast to the drab clothes worn by peasants. The men wear pants that are tight from ankle to knee, then flare into baggy legs that take up plenty of fabric. Their shirt sleeves and collars are trimmed with lace, their feet are encased in shiny black riding boots, and they not only wear colorful scarves around their necks, but also tied around their upper arms. The women dress in elaborate riding skirts made of velvet, soft cotton blouses trimmed with lace, and delicate slippers. Their hair is covered with beautiful scarves, with gold trinkets sewn along the edges that hang tinkling upon the forehead.

Time in Nova Vaasa: The domain of Nova Vaasa experiences a perpetual summer. The days are always warm, sunny, and long. Winds whisper across the grasslands, causing them to ripple and sway like ocean waves. Sometimes, in the late afternoon, thunder-clouds form in the skies and spill rain upon the land in a brief but violent storm. Occasionally hail falls, wiping out a crop, but usually the weather is ideal; farmers can harvest four crops per year.

The year is measured by a lunar calendar based on the waxing and waning of Nova Vaasa's five moons. The beginning of each year is marked by a night in which all five of the moons (each of which represents one of the noble families) are full. On this night, a council of nobles is held in Kantora. On this "night of bright truth," it is said no lies can be told.

The year is 360 days long. The 180 days leading from the beginning of the year are known as the "waxing days." The 180 days that follow are known as the "waning days." The midpoint of these two "seasons" is marked by a single night in which all of the moons are new. This is known as the "night of dark deeds," and it is said to be an evening for lies, murder, and treachery.

That face, alas! no more is fair,
Those lips no longer red:
Dark are my eyes, now closed in death,
And every charm is fled.

–David Mallett

Because the undead Sachmet draws upon a number of the abilities she had in life, the priestess' original, human form is described in detail below. It is theoretically possible (via a *wish* or a *resurrection* spell) for the PCs to transform Sachmet back into this original form. If this happens, the priestess tries immediately to recruit (or force) the PCs to adopt the worship of Bast and follow her orders. If the PCs resist, the priestess uses her spells to protect herself, and summons felines in her defence.

It is strongly recommended, however, that the DM prevent the PCs from returning the undead Sachmet to her human form. The suspense (and challenge) of *The Awakening* comes from the fact that the undead Sachmet keeps returning to attack the PCs, in ever more powerful forms.

Over time, Sachmet becomes a truly horrifying opponent. Ultimately the PCs must use the clues provided to devise a way to seal her back inside her tomb.

Sachmet knows every chamber, passageway, and secret door within her tomb. All locked doors open instantly to her touch. She fights to defend her tomb, to protect her cats, to recover her property, and to destroy the symbols and servants of Set.

Sachmet

18th-level Priestess, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	6	Str	14
Movement	12	Dex	18
Level/Hit Dice	18	Con	16
Hit Points	77	Int	15
THAC0	10	Wis	18
No. of Attacks	1	Cha	13
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Spells		
Special Defenses	Spells		
Magic Resistance	10% (with headdress)		

Sachmet is a beautiful woman in her late 40s, with a full figure, long dark hair, and flawless skin. Her ears are slightly pointed and her eyes are striking—rather than being round, her pupils are reflective, catlike slits.

Sachmet wears a starched white kilt, its hem embroidered with tiny gold cats pouncing upon black snakes, and golden sandals. Her ceremonial headdress is made of wood that has been carved in the shape of a cat's head and carefully painted. It has the same properties as an *amulet of magical resistance*.

Background: See pages 4–5.

Current Sketch: Sachmet lives only for pleasure. She loves to have her hair stroked, to eat fine food, and to lounge in warm places, surrounded by beautiful things. She prefers the company of cats, and sees humans only as things that she can use to satisfy her desires. When happy, she purrs.

Indeed, Sachmet is a fierce protector of cats of every description. She will use any injury or insult to a cat as an excuse to indulge her passion for "playing cat and mouse"–her phrase for slowly torturing someone to death.

If returned to human form, Sachmet will seek to impose the worship of Bast upon the

people of Nova Vaasa. She may start by setting up a temple in one of the smaller towns, gradually winning converts to the new religion. If necessary, she will use her ability to control the fierce plains cats as a protective measure.

Combat: Sachmet primarily uses her spells, leaving the actual fighting to her minions (human and cat). She has the ability to hide in shadows and/or move silently with a 95% chance of success.

Spell List (10/10/9/9/6/4/2): *Animal friendship, anti-vermin barrier, bless,* curse, *call upon faith, command, cause light wounds, curse, endure heat/cold, mistaken missive, sanctuary; chant, charm person or mammal, enthrall, hold person, messenger, cause fear, heat metal, speak with animals, spiritual claws* (same as *spiritual hammer,* but creates two claws that inflict 1d4 + 3 points damage each), *withdraw; animate dead, dispel magic, invisibility purge, magical vestment, miscast magic, protection from fire, random causality, bestow curse, remove paralysis; animal summoning I, chaotic combat, cause serious wounds, fire purge, imbue with spell ability, poison* (reverse of *neutralize poison*), *protection from lightning, repel insects, spell immunity; animal growth, animal summoning II, commune with nature, cause critical wounds, elemental forbiddance, true seeing; animate object, conjure animals, heal, word of recall; creeping doom, confusion.*

As a high priestess of Bast, Sachmet also has the ability to *charm mammals* (felines only) and *shape change* (into any form of feline) once per day. The following 5th-level spells from the RAVENLOFT *Campaign Setting* box may be substituted if desired: *cloud of putrification, living ward.*

The Mummy

Sachmet does not resemble a common mummy. It should take the PCs some time to figure out what kind of creature she really is.

As a high priestess of Bast, Sachmet was granted nine lives by the cat goddess. The first was her mortal life. To prepare Sachmet for her next eight incarnations, the priestesses of Bast embalmed her body with clays mixed with special oils and potions, using spells to make their effects permanent. This process sealed her *ba* (the portion of the soul that contains a person's physical vitality) inside her body. They then stored her *ka* (the portion of the soul that contains a person's mental vitality) inside magical *canopic thought jars* (see page 49).

But the worshippers of Set had one final trick to play. Secretly, they slipped *dust of dryness* into one of the embalming oils. As a result, Sachmet's flesh shrivelled on her bones as the water leeched from her body. Hence, Sachmet is an emaciated corpse. Her flesh is shriveled like dried fruit and her bones are visible through parchment-yellow skin. Her hair clings in dark clumps to her scalp and her eyes are dried to husks. When she moves, her bones make a faint grinding noise. Her neck bears two puncture marks, a legacy of the attack by the priest of Set (see pages 4–5).

Sachmet will rise from her tomb a total of eight times before she can be laid to rest permanently. At first she is quite weak—not much more powerful than a zombie—but with each subsequent awakening she becomes stronger and more cunning. As her awareness increases, she gradually gains more powers and recalls her spell abilities. (*Note: The powers and abilities described in each of the awakenings are cumulative.*)

Permanent Immunities: The following oils and potions were used to embalm Sachmet: *potion of fire resistance*, *oil of acid resistance*, *Murdock's insect ward*, and *oil of elemental invulnerability*. As a result, Sachmet is immune to damage from all forms of acid and all normal fires. (She saves vs. magical fire with a +4 bonus; if the saving throw fails, damage is still reduced by –2 per die of damage.) Insects cannot approach within 5 feet of her. She is also protected against each of the four elemental forces (Earth, Air, Fire, and Water); elemental creatures attacking her suffer a –1 penalty per die of damage.

Like many undead creatures, she is immune to *sleep*, *charm*, insanity, and death spells. Sachmet may be turned, but only by priests who worship a lawful god (good or evil). No cat whatsoever will attack her—attempts to force a cat to do so will drive it insane. Finally, since Sachmet has already been killed once by poison, and it cannot kill her a second time. Her flesh (what remains of it) is highly poisonous (Type J poison) if consumed.

Special Weaknesses: Sachmet is especially vulnerable to holy water created by a priest of Set (or any other serpent god), suffering double the normal damage from it. Holy water blessed by any lawful deity (good or evil) inflicts normal damage. All others have no effect. She is also vulnerable to attack by a *staff of the serpent*. She is immune to the staff's poison, but suffers double damage from its blows.

Special Powers: Until she is magically sealed inside her crypt (see page 59), Sachmet can *teleport* anywhere within her tomb at will. She can also *teleport* to any location in Nova Vaasa and back to her tomb again, once every two days, but only to the vicinity of an object that has been taken from her tomb. Homing in on it like a beacon, she materializes within half a mile of the stolen object, then shambles toward it. Having recovered the item, she *teleports* back to her crypt with it. (Any crypt cats may accompany Sachmet; see page 61.)

Mummy Rot: A blow from Sachmet's hands inflicts a horrible rotting disease upon any victim who fails to save vs. polymorph with a –2 penalty. This disease causes the affected area to erupt in sores, turn a mottled yellow-purple, and emit a horrible stench. It can only be cured by a *cure disease* or *heal* spell. The disease follows a peculiar progression, affecting only one portion of the body. A blow to an arm or leg, for example, will infect only that limb. A blow to the head infects only the head, while a blow to the torso infects the torso, but not the limbs or head. The

disease progresses over 1d4 days, when that part of the body is completely infected. To determine where Sachmet's blows land, roll 1d12: 1=head; 2–3=right arm; 4–6=torso; 7–8=left arm; 9–10=right leg; 11–12=left leg. Once the disease has taken hold, the infected portion of the victim's body becomes shaky and unusable.

If Sachmet can see the victim, she can evoke a spasm in him or her once per round (successful save vs. spell to avoid the effect). Spasms have the following effects:

- *Head*: No spellcasting or attacks are possible during the round when the spasm occurs. Movement is reduced by one-third.
- *Arm*: No spell requiring somatic or material components may be cast during the round in which the spasm occurs. If the shield arm is afflicted, any shield bonus is lost. If the weapon arm is afflicted, no attacks are possible.
- *Leg*: Dexterity bonuses to Armor Class and saving throws are lost during the round when the spasm occurs. Movement rate is reduced by half, and any attempts to move or fight require a successful Dexterity check or the victim stumbles and falls
- *Torso*: No movement, spellcasting, or combat is possible during the round when the spasm occurs. If the victim is on a mount or in an unstable position (such as climbing a wall), the convulsion requires an appropriate ability check (DM's decision) with a –5 (–25%) penalty to avoid a fall.

Killing Sachmet: Each time Sachmet is reduced to 0 hit points, her body crumbles to dust and her *ba* flies back to her tomb, where a new body forms inside her sarcophagus for it to enter. This body is identical in appearance to each of her previous undead bodies. It requires 1d4 turns to form.

Only after Sachmet awakens for the eighth time (into her ninth and final life) will her death be permanent.

First Awakening: THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6; AC 8; HD 2; hp 8; MV 6; SA nil; SD nil; MR special; SZ M (5′6″ tall); AL CE; ML special; XP 650

On her first awakening, Sachmet behaves like a mindless zombie. She moves slowly in a straight line toward her opponents with arms outstretched, always striking last in any combat round. She uses her hands to pummel her victims, fighting mindlessly until she has been destroyed.

Sachmet inspires a mild horror check, at +2; she can be turned as a zombie.

Second Awakening: THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6; AC 7; HD 2+2; hp 12; MV 9; SA nil; SD special; MR special; SZ M (5′6″ tall); AL CE; ML unsteady (6); XP 800.

On her second awakening, Sachmet has gained a little intelligence. She now has a chance to gain initiative and can coordinate attacks with both hands, for two attacks per round.

Sachmet inspires a mild horror check, at +2. Opponents who pass their horror checks must make a normal fear check. Sachmet can be turned as a ghoul.

Third Awakening. THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d8; AC 6; HD 3+3; hp 16; MV 12; SA wand of Bast (see page 58), dread; SD special; MR nil; SZ M (5′6″ tall); AL CE; ML average (8); XP 975.

On her third awakening, Sachmet has gained some strength, and she has achieved an almost-human intelligence. She is learning to creep up on victims and sometimes can gain surprise. She has the ability to hide in shadows and/or move silently with a 10% chance of success.

Sachmet is starting to remember how to use the items that were placed in her tomb. She has the ability to use any one magical item it contains.

Sachmet's fear aura is now fully developed, so any creature seeing her must save vs. spell at –2 or be overcome with dread for 2d4 rounds. Characters afflicted with dread suffer a –3 (–15%) penalty to all die rolls. If the save is successful, opponents still must pass a mild

horror check, at +2. Note that mummy fear is a special attack that reverses the normal rule for combined fear and horror checks. Sachmet can be turned as a shadow

Fourth Awakening: THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d8, AC 5; HD 5; hp 27; MV 12; SA magical items, dread; SD special; MR 10%; SZ M (5'6" tall); AL CE; ML steady (11); XP 1,400.

On her fourth awakening, Sachmet has gained more intelligence. She has the ability to hide in shadows and/or move silently with a 25% chance of success.

At this point, Sachmet remembers that her *headdress of magic resistance* was hidden in her tomb. Wearing this cat-shaped item gives her a 10% magical resistance. Any nonworshiper wearing it suffers a troublesome curse that is somehow magic-related. (Such a curse might cause the victim's own spells or magical items to fail 20% of the time.)

Sachmet can now use any magical item in her tomb, and she can direct the actions of her crypt cats; 1d4 of the smaller crypt cats follow her everywhere. Sachmet can be turned as a wight.

Fifth Awakening: THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8/1d8; AC 4; HD 6; hp 31; MV 12; SA magical items, spells, dread; SD special, shape change; MR 10%; SZ M (5'6" tall); AL CE; ML elite (13); XP 2,500.

On her fifth awakening, Sachmet has gained the ability to use her 1st-and 2nd-level spells. She has the ability to hide in shadows and/or move silently with a 50% chance of success.

Sachmet now has the ability to *charm mammal* (felines only) and/or *shape change* (into any form of feline) once per day. She is still undead in feline form, and will have a mangy, emaciated body. Sachmet is accompanied by 2d4 small crypt cats. She can be turned as a wraith

Sixth Awakening: THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10; AC 3; HD 7; hp 38; MV 12; SA magical items, spells, dread, disease; SD special, shape change; MR 10%; SZ M (5'6" tall); AL CE; ML elite (13); XP 4,000.

On her sixth awakening, Sachmet has gained the ability to use her 3rd- and 4th-level spells. She can hide in shadows and/or move silently with a 75% chance of success. Normal weapons inflict only half damage upon her; magical weapons inflict full damage.

Sachmet is accompanied by 4d4 small crypt cats. She can be turned as a mummy.

Seventh Awakening: THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10, AC 2; HD 8; hp 43; MV 12; SA magical items, spells, dread, disease, body control; SD special, shape change; MR 10%; SZ M (5'6" tall); AL CE; ML champion (15); XP 5,000.

On her seventh awakening, Sachmet has gained the ability to use her 5th-and 6th-level spells. She has the ability to hide in shadows and/or move silently with a 95% chance of success. She is immune to normal weapons; only magical weapons can damage her. She is accompanied by 8d4 small and 1d4 large crypt cats. Sachmet can be turned as a spectre.

Eighth Awakening: THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 1d12/1d12; AC 1; HD 9; hp 49; MV 12; SA magical items, spells, dread, disease, body control; SD special, shape change; MR 10%; SZ M (5'6" tall); AL CE; ML fanatic (17); XP 7,000.

On her eighth awakening, Sachmet has gained the ability to use her 7th-level spells. Nine large crypt cats and 16d4 small crypt cats accompany her everywhere she goes, fighting to the death to defend their mistress. Sachmet can be turned as a vampire.

THE FIRST AWAKENING

Rous'd from their slumbers, in gloom wrapt the grisly spectres rise
Curs, howling and obstreperously sullen
Pass and repass hush'd as the foot of night
–Robert Blair

The Awakening begins in Kantora, the major city in the domain of Nova Vaasa. If the player characters (PCs) are starting from a point outside Ravenloft, they enter Nova Vaasa after sharing the dream described below. (If the PCs are starting the adventure within Ravenloft, the DM can choose one of the adventure hooks on page 14.)

Your dreams are troubled by strange, shifting images. Everything seems obscured, as if by a thick mist. In the distance you hear the roar of a large cat, followed by soft, padding footsteps coming steadily closer. You hear a low growl, uncomfortably close at hand.

You reach for your weapons, but your body seems to be moving in slow motion. A sense of dread grips you as you realize you'll never be able to meet the threat in time.

Suddenly, a figure hurtles toward you, out of the mist. It is a huge cat, ears back and fangs exposed. Its claws are extended, ready to tear into your flesh. You scream, but no sound emerges from your mouth. You try to run, but are held in place. In slow motion the cat descends upon you, ready to tear the flesh from your bones. . . .

Each of the PCs wakens in a dark, tightly confined space. With a little effort (a successful Strength check) they are able to lift the lids of the boxes that enclose them. To their horror (make them roll a check if they don't role-play it), they find they were lying in mist-filled coffins. The faint wisps of mist slowly dissipate after each lid is opened.

The coffins are a one-way, one-use portal into this Ravenloft domain. They have no magical properties and cannot be used to escape Nova Vaasa.

A Casket of Curiosity

The PCs have arrived in the shop of Nicolai Androv, coffin maker, one of Kantora's few middle-class merchants. Nicolai screams in fright as the PCs emerge from the coffins, but quickly recovers (he has seen a number of strange sights in his profession) and implores them not to damage the wood, "imported from the forests of Barovia and very expensive." He is a 0-level human.

If questioned, Nicolai can provide the PCs with information concerning the local geography and political system, as he knows many nobles personally. After the PCs have had a chance to question him, read the following passage.

A wagon pulls up outside the shop, and two workers begin unloading it. One of the items they carry in is an ornately carved wooden container, shaped like a cat and perhaps two feet in length. The entire container is studded with tiny gems, while the face has been gilded.

"Wonderful!" Nicolai exclaims. "Such fine work! Who did you purchase it from?"

"Gorki," one of the workers replies.

Brushing the dust off the container, Nicolai eagerly inspects it. "Why, the seal isn't broken yet!" he exclaims. "Let's see what's inside."

Unless the PCs stop him, Nicolai opens the cat-sized casket. Inside lie the remains of a domestic cat, encased in a layer of colorfully painted clay. Just as everyone bends over to take a look, the body springs out of the casket and attacks. (The monster is a crypt cat. For a full description, see page 61.)

Crypt Cat: THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1–2/1–2/1–2; AC 7; HD 1+1; hp 7; MV 12; SA disease; SD nil; MR nil; SZ S (1' long); Int animal (1); AL CN; ML special; XP 120.

Alternative Entries

If the PCs are already within Ravenloft, in another of the domains, they can be lured into Nova Vaasa using either of the following adventure "hooks." Each leads to Nicolai's coffin shop and the encounter on page 13.

- The PCs are hired to escort a shipment of fine hardwood that is traveling by wagon to a casket shop in Kantora. It seems that the giant black cats which stalk the plains of Nova Vaasa have suddenly and inexplicably become active during the day. In the past few days, two shipments have been lost.
- One of the PCs is troubled by a recurring nightmare (the dream described on page 13). Fortunately, a Vistani who specializes in dream interpretation is in the area. Entering a trance, she tells the PC that he or she must travel to Nova Vaasa to be rid of the dream.

She says, "Great danger and great wealth lie intertwined like serpents in Kantora. The end of the dream begins with he who builds boxes for they who dream no more."

Curses and Coins

Over the next few days, the PCs can purchase nonmagical supplies and equipment from Kantora's marketplace. Prices are those listed in the *Player's Handbook*, but with a 100% tax on every item. If the PCs carry coinage from a world outside of Ravenloft, it will be accepted only if it is precious metal, and then it will be valued by weight. A money changer mentions that it is "not the first strange coin I've seen today."

Aside from the shops of the middle-class merchants and the smaller cubbyholes of the lesser vendors, most of the marketplace consists of open-air stalls. The PCs can have

from two to four of the following odd encounters here.

- A merchant tries to interest the PCs in an assortment of rare skins and leathers. He is holding up the skin of a snake whose body was patterned in brilliant bands of yellow, red, and black. Suddenly, two dozen domestic cats race into his shop. Leaping up onto the counter, they tear the snake skin from his hands. He tries to drive them away, but they rip the skin to pieces. Then, as one, they turn and flee.
- After making a few purchases and receiving coins of Nova Vaasa in change, the PCs attempt to make another purchase. The merchant takes their money, then exclaims in horror as she looks closely at one of the coins.

"Aii!" she exclaims. "This one's unlucky. Take it back!"

Just then, a domestic cat hurtles past, a mongrel dog close on its heels. The cat bounds onto one of the displays, scattering and breaking the merchant's goods.

"You see?" she shrieks. "It's started already. Away with you! And take your unlucky coin!"

The coin bears the image of a reclining cat on one face, and the other side of the coin bears strange symbols. (If translated magically, these hieroglyphs read "City of Bubastis. Goddess protect our pleasures.") The coin bears a minor curse: The person possessing it will continually misplace or lose money.

- As the PCs pass a pottery stall, the proprietor hisses at them. Beckoning them closer, he unwraps a ceramic figurine from its protective cloth. The figurine, about 2 inches tall, is that of a cat. Its once-colorful glaze is now dull, and it has been badly chipped.

"It's magic," he whispers. "A protective talisman. Very ancient, very rare." If the PCs were injured by the crypt cat, he adds, "It also has healing properties." (In fact, the figurine carries a minor curse. Anyone possessing it develops an insatiable craving for cream.)

The merchant asks an exorbitant price for the figurine, which a *detect magic* spell will quickly reveal to be nonmagical. If questioned about the figurine, he will be evasive about where it came from. Next time the PCs pass the stall, they'll find it empty. Merchants will say the man suddenly died after drinking two gallons of cream.

- The PCs pass a wretched looking stall where a ragged vegetable merchant is being threatened by one of Kantora's tax collectors (a 0-level human) and an officer of the city militia (see below). The merchant is begging for a few days to raise money she owes. The tax man motions to the officer, who deliberately leans on a shelf of the stall, causing it to collapse and spill produce into the street.

A bony cat slinks by and the militia member prepares to kick it, but the woman scoops it into her arms, nervously stroking it.

"That's the reason you can't pay," the tax collector says. "You're wasting your money feeding that cat. Why, it's fatter than you are! But we'll soon fix that."

Laughing at the woman's distress, the militia member reaches for the cat. His hands wrap around its neck; it is clear he intends to strangle it. The woman falls to her knees, begging him to stop.

Suddenly, he drops the cat and clutches his chest. "Ouch!" he cries. "It scratched me!" His hand drips with blood. Four deep gashes, much too large to have been made by the cat, have appeared almost magically across his chest. Roaring, he prepares to take out his wrath on the cowering merchant.

If the PCs step in, the militia member will fight them. He is a 1st-level fighter, equipped with ring mail and club, but he is also a werewolf. If he starts to lose the fight, he will change into half-wolf form, but the tax collector yells, "Not here, you fool! Not in front of the people!" Seeing the militiaman change is cause for a mild horror check, with a +2 bonus.

Militia Member/Werewolf: THAC0 20/15; Dmg 1d6 (club) or 2d4 (bite); AC 7; HD 4+3; hp 22; MV 12; SA surprise; SD hit only by silver or at least +1 weapons in wolf forms; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); Int avg (8); AL CE; ML steady (12); XP 420.

Terror Takes the Reins

A large section of Kantora's marketplace is devoted to corrals and stables where horses are bought, sold, and bred. The area around the horse sheds and corrals is packed with shops selling riding gear, hay, wagons, riding clothes, and decorative trinkets for saddles and bridles.

It is likely that the PCs will want to purchase riding horses so they can visit other areas of the domain. As the people of Nova Vaasa say, "A horse is the ship of the grasslands. Only a peasant drowns in the dust."

Alternatively, the PCs may stumble across the horse market by accident. In either case, they have a chance meeting with Nicolai the casket seller near a corral.

Ever since the cat-shaped casket came to his shop, Nicolai has been plagued by bad luck. Now, due to the strange occurrences elsewhere in town, nobody will buy it. To rid himself of the bad luck, Nicolai burned the casket, but not before removing the gems—he carries them in a pouch in his hand.

The first encounter with the undead Sachmet takes place as the PCs talk with Nicolai, near the corral. Read the players the following screened text.

> Your eye is caught by the riding horses in the corral. These are some of the finest horses you have ever seen. No wonder the people of this city boast about the equine bloodlines.
>
> As your eye ranges over the horses, you notice a sudden change in their behavior. Stallions are sniffing the wind and whinnying. Mares are stamping the ground, their eyes wide and ears back. Several of the animals rear up on their hind legs or kick at the corral fence, clearly agitated.
>
> Handlers and grooms rush into the corral, trying to calm the animals. But instead of obeying, the horses begin to rush in a circle. Suddenly, a stallion kicks a section of the fence out with a splintering crash. The horses pour through the opening like floodwaters from a broken dam, terror in their eyes.

Everyone in the horse market scatters as the maddened horses burst from the corral and flee through the market, smashing stalls and breaking merchandise. The grooms run after them with ropes, but the PCs must move quickly to avoid being trampled or kicked.

Horse, Riding (20): THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1–2/1–2; AC 7; HD 3; hp 12 each; MV 24; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ L; Int animal (1); AL N; ML unsteady (5); XP 65 each.

> As the horses thunder off, a feline yowl pierces the air. Looking up, you see a row of cats on a rooftop. Their bodies are stiff and their eyes all peer intently in the same direction.
>
> Following their gaze, you see a shambling figure coming down the street. It looks human, but it walks with an awkward gait, its arms stretched out in front of it. A low moaning noise emanates from its gaping mouth. As it draws nearer, people begin to scream. The creature's body is hideously emaciated, and its bones are clearly visible under parchment-thin skin. Clumps of dried earth cling to its withered frame.

Sachmet (First Awakening): THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6; AC 8; HD 2; hp 8; MV 6; SA nil; SD special; MR special; SZ M (5′ 6″ tall); Int non (0); AL CE; ML special; XP 650.

All who see her may be required to make a mild horror check with a +2 bonus. (The majority of those in the marketplace fail and run, screaming in terror.)

When Sachmet awoke from her long slumber, she immediately realized that one of her sacred cats was missing. She has *teleported* to Kantora to recover it. Because the cat's casket has been destroyed, Sachmet homes in on the gems instead, heading directly for Nicolai. If he fails his fear check, he flees in terror, dropping the bag of gems.

Sachmet attacks anyone who stands in her way. At the same time, she sends out a mental call for the missing crypt cat. If it is still "alive," it arrives in 1d4 rounds. Once she has recovered the gems (and the cat, if applicable), Sachmet *teleports* with them back to her tomb.

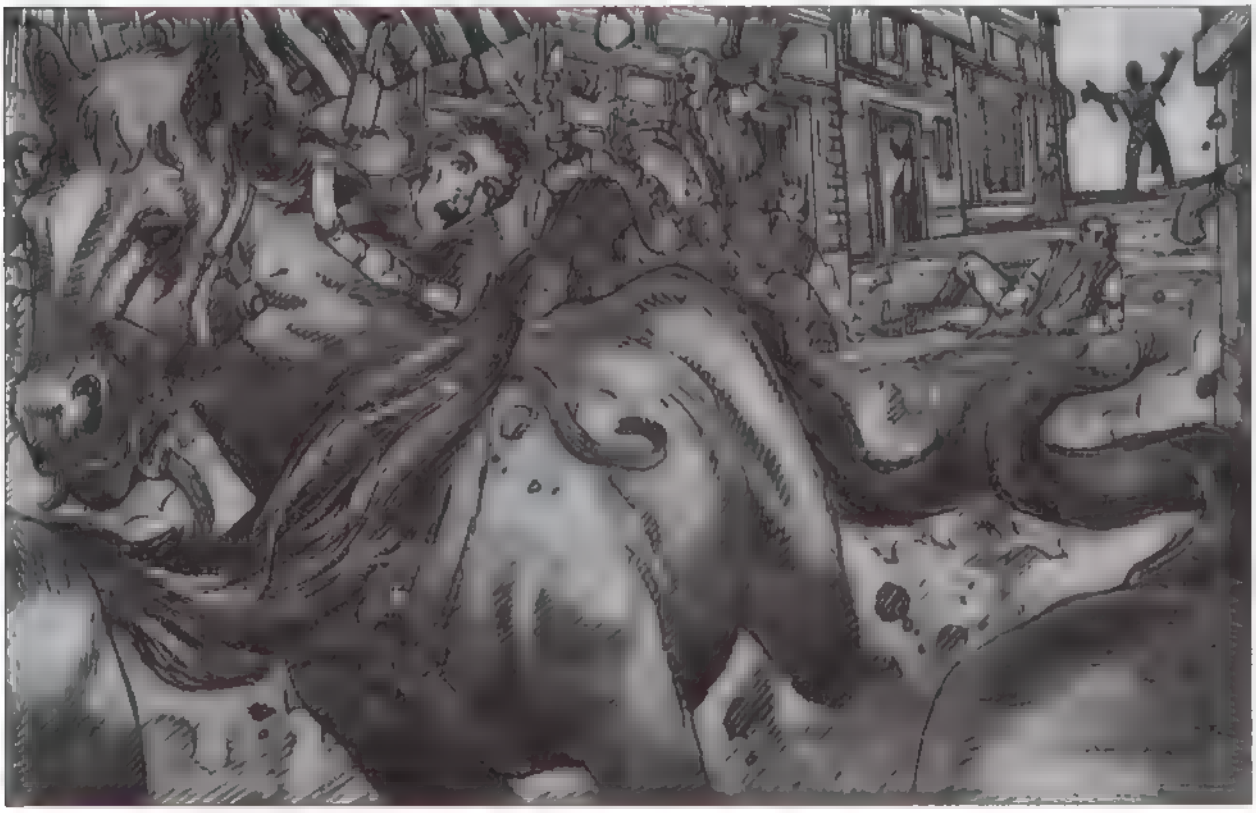
If Sachmet is turned, she is forced to retreat. As long as the holy symbol is being presented, she must stay 30 feet away, yet she continues to be drawn by the gems, and she follows the PCs at a distance if they have them.

At this point Sachmet is a weak monster and should be easy for the PCs to "kill." Should she die, read the following to the players.

The undead creature crumples to the ground, all semblance of life gone. It lies motionless, but you cannot be certain it will not rise again

Suddenly, the body crumbles away to dust. A breeze stirs the motes. Something moves within the swirl of dust. It is ghostly, almost transparent. But then you make it out: It's a tiny bird with a strangely shaped head. The bird spreads its wings, and with a furious beating that resembles the sound of a hummingbird, shoots up into the sky and quickly vanishes from sight to the north.

The bird has a human head, and it is Sachmet's *ba*, the portion of her soul that represents her physical vitality. It is as insubstantial as a ghost, and impossible to strike or capture, since it has no more substance than a thought. It returns to the tomb, where it will enter the new body that is forming in preparation for her next awakening.



Care charming Sleep, thou easer of all woes,
Brother to Death, sweetly thyself dispose
On this afflicted prince, fall like a cloud
In gentle showers; give nothing that is loud
Or painful to his slumbers.

–John Fletcher

By now, the PCs have come to the attention of Prince Othmar, the political leader of Nova Vaasa. This may well be the result of a run-in with the tax collector and militia member in the previous section (see page 15). The PCs may even have been forcibly detained by other officers and brought before the prince for punishment. Othmar offers to waive the penalty if the PCs agree to perform a "small favor" for him. Alternatively, the prince may summon the PCs with an offer of employment. He has been looking for adventurers from outside the domain to perform a task with which he wishes not to be identified.

In either case, the PCs are ushered into the throne room of the majestic Bolshnik home in Kantora. The prince is well protected by a personal phalanx of 12 knights (all 4th-level fighters, armed with axes and wearing scale mail).

Knights (12): THAC0 17; Dmg 1d8 (axe); AC 6; HD 4; hp 21 each; MV 12; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (6′ tall); Int very (12); AL LE; ML elite (14); XP 175 each.

When the PCs meet the prince, they notice immediately that his hands tremble and there are dark circles under his eyes. It is clear that he hasn't slept for several days. He yawns constantly and rubs his eyes. He is extremely irritable.

The prince questions the PCs about their talents and abilities. Finally he nods, as if satisfied that they are the people for the job. At that point, read the following screened text to the players.

"Five days ago, a shipment of royal tribute, bound for Kantora from Egertus, was waylaid by bandits," the prince explains. "Part of the tribute was a very rare and ancient staff, a gift to me from Sir Hiregaard, one of my strongest supporters. If you will retrieve this staff for me, I will allow you to keep half the stolen tribute. The shipment included several sacks of gold and silver, and a small chest filled with gems.

"The bandits are led by a woman of Vistani blood. Their lair is believed to be in the Briarweed Forest.

"I must insist that justice be served swiftly. Rather than dragging the leader back here to face the courts, I would prefer that she be killed as an example to other bandits.

"I would send my own militia to do the job, but the bandits would only flee before them. Recovering the tribute requires stealth. For that reason, I ask that you do not reveal that you are in my employ."

The real reason the prince does not want it known that the PCs work for him is that if he sends his own soldiers to recover the tribute, the leader of the Briarweed Forest bandits will reveal how Othmar killed his father. (That bandit supplied the poison for the job.) Also, other bandit groups might break their agreements with Othmar if they know he attacked the Briarweed Forest bandits

Allow the PCs to bargain for a larger share of the tribute if they like. Othmar wants to recover the *staff*, and he will agree to give the PCs all the tribute if they press the point.

The prince has a letter from Sir Hiregaard, describing the *staff* as being painted green, with a black diamond pattern spiraling along its length. Its top is carved into the shape of a snake's head. The letter adds that Hiregaard's

personal wizard detected a strong aura of magic around the *staff*, but Othmar will not mention this unless asked. The letter further says that the wizard found the *staff*, but it does not say where. Finally, the letter reports that Sir Hiregaard decided to send the *staff* to his prince because the snake is part of the Bolshnik family crest. The note was written 13 days ago, on the day the *staff* was found.

After the meeting, the PCs may ask questions about Prince Othmar's exhaustion. The knights remain close-lipped, but servants mention that the prince has been troubled by nightmares. One of the servants will say the following:

"Thirteen days ago, my lord fainted dead away, for no apparent reason at all. I've heard that only a potent herbal draught concocted by the family physician keeps him awake now." The servant casts glances each way, to see if anyone is listening, then continues explaining quietly. "Sleep is unpleasant for my lord, for he has been plagued by nightmares since he fainted. He often wakes up screaming several times before morning.

"The first time it happened, we rushed in, thinking someone was trying to murder him in his bed. We found the prince staring into the darkness, clutching a tiny garter snake that had somehow slithered into his room. All the while, he kept muttering to himself.

"'The snake,' he said, over and over again. 'The snake will protect us.'

"We thought he meant the little snake he held in his hands. Indeed, he kept it by his bedside in a wicker basket every night from then on, and he said he would personally flog anyone who harmed it.

"But the snake didn't help him at all. In fact, the nightmares only increased."

Prince Othmar's troubled sleep is due to the *staff of Set* (see page 23), which is sending him visions.

Prince Othmar

9th-level Warrior, Neutral Evil

Armor Class	4	Str	15
Movement	12	Dex	14
Level/Hit Dice	9	Con	16
Hit Points	86	Int	14
THAC0	12	Wis	12
No. of Attacks	3/2 rounds	Cha	9
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Weapon specialization		
Special Defenses	Nil		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Prince Othmar is a large man in his early 40s, with dark hair and perpetually angry eyes. His moustache is enormous—its waxed points stretch until they are even with his ears. Although his hair is still a dark auburn color, his moustache has turned steel-gray. An old battle scar crosses his mouth on a diagonal line, puckering his lips.

Othmar dresses in colorful costumes, like striped pants, bright yellow shirts, and red scarves, all embroidered with a black snake twined about a silver axe. On his head is a wedge-shaped hat made of the glossy black fur of a plains cat. He wears a heavy gold earring in one ear.

Background. Prince Othmar was born in Nova Vaasa, into the aristocratic Bolshnik family. At that time the Bolshniks shared the rule of the domain equally with its four other noble families, each family head ruling for a "five-year" term.

Othmar became the head of the Bolshnik family at the age of 21, when his father died suddenly. There were whispers among the nobles that his father had been poisoned, but nothing was ever proved. When strange accidents claimed the lives of Othmar's two sisters and older brother, suspicions deepened.

Othmar assumed the title of *Prince of Nova Vaasa* 12 years ago. He was to have assumed control of the domain for only a five-year term, but his specially recruited lycanthropic militia

has kept him in power and rendered the other noble families subservient. (Lord Malken is not concerned with political power, so Othmar seems to rule Nova Vaasa with impunity.) To demonstrate his might, he brutally enforces his laws in the city of Kantora, his stronghold, and across the realm.

Current Sketch: The other noble families of Nova Vaasa pay grudging tribute to Prince Othmar, apportioning him a hefty share of the taxes they collect each year. His demands for tribute continually increase.

The Hiregaard family supports Othmar, saying that he is prince "by right of might." The weaker Chekiv family supports him for different reasons: Since Othmar gained the throne, the petty wars between the families have been put to an end. The Rivtoffs and the Vistins pretend to support Othmar, but secretly work toward a return to the five-year term system of rule. Their efforts to dethrone him, however, are complicated by their internal squabbles over which family should assume the throne next. The Rivtoffs were next in line for the throne after the Bolshniks, but the Vistin five-year tenure should have begun two years ago, and both families claim it is their turn to rule.

Although he will vehemently deny it, Othmar maintains alliances with a number of Nova Vaasa's bandit leaders. In return for not being hunted down by his troops, they have agreed not to raid any of the Bolshnik holdings. Instead, they concentrate their raids upon lands controlled by the Rivtoff and Vistin families.

Combat: Prince Othmar is proficient in five weapons: the battle axe, heavy crossbow, horseman's flail, light horse lance, and scourge. He uses the latter to personally administer his notion of justice. He has also specialized in the bec de corbin. When using this pole weapon, he gets two attacks per round and gains a +1 bonus to his attack rolls and a +2 bonus to his damage rolls (in addition to his normal Strength bonus). He wears bronze plate mail.

Prince Othmar's magical items include a

scarab of enraging enemies and a *periapt of wound closure*. His warhorse is shod with *horseshoes of a zephyr*.

The Bolshnik family commands 100 footsoldiers (1st-level fighters) equipped with ring mail, battle axes, and shields. Othmar's personal guard includes 15 knights (4th-level fighters), armored in scale mail, who fight on horseback with light horse lances or axes. Each has a battle axe tattoo on his left shoulder.

Additionally, Othmar can call upon the 200-member militia that patrols Kantora as "keepers of the peace." (However, they serve to increase the level of violence in the city if anything.) These 1st-level fighters, equipped with ring mail and clubs, include several werewolves.

The Briarweed Forest

The Briarweed Forest is the home of Chezna, an outcast Vistani who has become a darkling (see the RAVENLOFT appendix of the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM) and a bandit leader. From this refuge, she stages raids upon those traveling the road between Egertus and Kantora.

Chezna's outlaw band is small; she has just six 2nd-level fighters in her employ, one of whom is a werewolf. However, their midnight-black horses are among the swiftest in Nova Vaasa, and their forest refuge is nearly impenetrable.

Chezna dreams of one day rejoining the Vistani. She believes she can buy her way back into her tribe by purchasing luxurious *vardos* for them. Until recently, she kept her promise to Prince Othmar and attacked only the Rivtoff and Vistin families. But Sir Hiregaard's recent shipment of tribute was too great a temptation; she broke her oath and stole from the prince's ally, much to his anger.

Chezna believes she is immune to retaliation by the prince. She can, after all, blackmail him if he tries to send his own soldiers against her. Besides, the defenses of her forest home will slow down any direct assault, giving her time to slip away on a swift horse.

Chezna did not realize that the tribute she was stealing contained the magical *staff* that Sir Hiregaard was sending to his prince. She has no idea of the *staff's* purpose or value, either. She keeps it only as a curiosity, and will be willing to part with it for cash, although the amount demanded will dramatically increase if she realizes how badly the PCs want it. The *staff* lies hidden in the hollow trunk of a dead tree whose shape mimics the face and grasping hands of an undead treant. A number of small, nonpoisonous snakes have crawled into the hollow trunk and are nesting there, coiled around the *staff* in a writhing mass.

Chezna and her small band of outlaws will defend their forest lair against anyone who ventures into it. They have prepared a number of traps. For every turn that the PCs spend in the forest, they have a 20% chance to trip one of the traps. If and when they do, select a trap from the list that follows.

- A tree branch, bent to the ground, is released when a trip wire across a path is triggered. Sharpened stakes have been affixed to the end of the branch; these inflict 2d4 points of damage.
- A net filled with rocks hangs over the trail. When a trip wire is snapped, these fall upon those below, inflicting 1d6 points of damage upon each character. Any character who makes a successful Dexterity check can easily leap out of the way. The DM should ask them which way they leap, because to either side of the trail are sharpened stakes, buried point-up in the ground and hidden by leaves, which inflict 2d4 points of damage.
- A hastily covered pit trap on the trail can be seen following a successful Intelligence check. Falling into the trap results in 1d4 damage. The pit is easy to leap over, but on the far side is a wide noose of rope affixed to a bent sapling. Landing inside the rope springs the trap, and the character is yanked up into a tangle of thorny vines, resulting in 1d6 damage.
- A branch across the trail is a trigger for a net that falls from the branches above. The net

has been coated with Type K poison.

In addition, the bandits have mined the forest with shrieker fungi. Should one of these sound, the bandits rush to the spot, attacking with bows from hidden positions.

Fungus, Shrieker (1d4): THAC0 16; Dmg nil; AC 7; hp 10 each; MV 1; SA nil; SD noise; MR nil; SZ M (4'–7' tall); Int non (0); AL N; ML steady (12); XP 120 each.

The Briarweed Forest is also home to a wolf pack. There is a 20% chance of encountering the wolves during each hour (noncumulative) spent in the forest. Additionally, a number of poisonous snakes have slithered into the forest, drawn by the magical *staff*. The chance for an encounter with a snake is 30% per hour (noncumulative).

Wolves (1d6): THAC0 19; Dmg 1d4+1; AC 7; HD 2+2; hp 13 each; MV 18; SA nil; SD nil; MR: nil; SZ S (2'–4' long); Int semi (3); AL N; ML avg (10); XP 65 each.

Snake, Poisonous: THAC0 19; Dmg 1; AC 6; HD 2+1; hp 9; MV 15; SA poison; SD nil; MR nil; SZ S (5' long); Int animal (1); AL N; ML avg (8); XP 175.

If and when the player characters enter the Briarweed Forest, read the following description in screened text to them.

After the clear sunlight of the grasslands, the forest is as dark as a subterranean cavern. Overhead, thick foliage screens out the light, casting a pall of gloom. Below, tree trunks cluster tightly together, the space between them choked with prickly briars.

The forest is unnaturally still. No birds sing, and no woodland creatures scurry through the bushes. The air smells sour and damp.

As you make your way through the thick woods, you catch a glimpse of movement up ahead. A sickly sweet smell hangs in the air. You approach cautiously, only to discover six corpses hanging by nooses from the branches of a large tree. The corpses turn slowly in their nooses, their faces horribly bloated. As you approach, a cloud of black flies lifts from each body. On the chest of one of the bodies are painted the words: "You're next."

This nasty sight is cause for a mild horror check, with a +2 bonus. The bodies are those of the Hiregaard soldiers who were escorting the shipment of tribute. They have been stripped of all treasure. It is the custom of Chezna's bandits to carry bodies into the forest and display them as a warning to intruders. As the PCs venture further into the Briarweed Forest, they will see corpses nailed to trees, heads affixed on stakes, and other gruesome sights. Some of the bodies have rotted away, leaving only skeletons.

Chezna and her bandits normally camp at the center of the wood, in a clearing where they tether their horses. Chezna keeps her vardo there—it is a decrepit-looking wagon. The hollow tree that hides the *staff* is on the edge of the clearing.

The bandits know every inch of the forest, and as soon as they realize that someone has entered it, they will begin to stalk the intruders, attacking them in a series of hit-and-run ambushes from hiding. They will attempt to drive the PCs into a trap; during any battle, each PC has a 10% chance to trip one.

Chezna wears leather armor and fights with a hollow dagger filled with Type E poison. She has a *potion of healing* and wears a *cloak of elvenkind*. Her bandits wear leather armor and fight with short bows and black-fletched arrows.

Chezna the Darkling: THAC0 19; Dmg 1d4; AC 6 (8); HD 2; hp 9; MV 12; SA poison; SD foreseeing; MR nil; SZ M (5'6" tall); Int very (12); ML avg (9); XP 420.

Bandits (2nd-level Fighters) (15): THAC0 19; Dmg 1d6; AC 7; HD 2; hp 10 each; MV 12; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (5'–6' tall); Int avg (9); ML avg (8); XP 35 each.

Bandit/Werewolf: THAC0 19/15; Dmg 1d6 (bow) or 2d4 (bite); AC 7; HD 4+3; hp 20; MV 12; SA surprise; SD hit only by silver or at least +1 weapons; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); Int avg (9); ML steady (12); XP 420.

If the PCs defeat Chezna and her bandits, a careful search of the campsite reveals the *staff*, hidden under some firewood. If any of the bandits is captured, he or she may offer to reveal the hiding place of the *staff* in exchange for his life, or a substantial bribe. His willingness to reveal this information (assuming the characters have asked for it!) is determined by a morale check.

The treasure captured from Sir Hiregaard's shipment amounts to 2,000 cp; 1,700 sp; 6,000 gp; 1,100 pp; and 19 gems. The sacks and chest are hidden in a camouflaged net in the branches of a tree near the bandit camp.

The Staff of Set

This staff is a *staff of the serpent* of the adder type, and it is a minor artifact created by the priests of Set. Workers at the Hiregaard quarries on the Koshka Bluffs discovered it in an area that was crawling with snakes. In addition to its usual powers (see the *Dungeon Master® Guide*), the staff magically locks any portal it touches with the equivalent of a 4th-level *wizard lock* spell. It also continually sends out a silent call to all snakes within a 1-mile radius (as the 4th-level priest spell *animal summoning I*), and it confers immunity to snake venom upon the person holding it.

Most importantly, it is the key to a spell of *retirement* for Sachmet (see *Van Richten's Guide to the Ancient Dead* [9451], Chapter V). When the *staff* is used to wedge close the door to Sachmet's tomb, the mummy falls into a deep slumber and cannot be awakened. Until it was removed from the mouth of the tomb, Sachmet could not return from death.

Set's Servant: When the *staff of Set* was removed from the door of Sachmet's tomb, allowing the mummy to awaken, the god Set immediately began searching for a minion to take on the task of resealing the tomb. Set selected Prince Othmar to be the one to wield the *staff* against Sachmet. However, Set is more than willing to work with the tools at hand. Set deemed Chezna and her bandits to be too weak to face Sachmet, but the PCs are another matter. . . .

When any PC picks up the *staff*, the character feels a flash of pain and collapses in a faint, still clutching the item. While dozing, the victim begins to experience some of the torments that Othmar suffered earlier—nightmares plague the character. These dreams include sleeping on a mattress of writhing snakes, being torn apart by fearsome cats, and the sinking of venomed fangs deep into the dreamer's hands or feet. The dreams also repeatedly include a man with burning eyes and snakelike teeth (Kematef, see page 5), who whispers urgently in the PC's ear. However, when Set's unwitting servant awakens from the nightmare, he is unable to remember the words.

If the PCs are careful not to touch the *staff*, Set chooses a servant anyway. Ideally, Set prefers a character of evil alignment. An alternative choice (equally valid in Set's eyes) is a PC who has ever committed intentionally evil acts in Ravenloft, which were cause for a powers check; a character who recently has failed a powers check is always a prime choice.

If neither of these conditions applies, Set instead chooses a PC that best fits his own dark, chaotic moods (a thief or frequent troublemaker would do nicely).

The DM is free to choose some appropriately dramatic action for choosing the servant. The *staff* probably will assume snake form on its own, surprising the group and biting the chosen PC. Alternately, the victim

could simply feel an overwhelming urge to grab the *staff*. In any case, the victim immediately falls asleep. He or she can be awakened by a sharp slap or by physical injury, but will remain groggy and move like a sleepwalker, dozing off the moment he or she is left undisturbed. Except for these brief periods of wakefulness, Set's servant remains sound asleep, clutching the *staff* in a vicelike grip. Attempts to remove it cause the *staff* to assume its serpent form and hiss in a threatening manner. (This is a bluff to frighten thieves; the *staff* does not actually attack.) If the *staff* is removed from the character's hands, he or she will act in an irrational and paranoid manner, demanding its return and threatening the taker.

From time to time, Set's servant becomes temporarily disoriented and confused when awakened. During these times, the DM should instruct the chosen PC to say, "Why do you call me (PC's name)? My name is *Kematef*." or, "The serpent shall strike again. The cat shall not escape." The character then falls soundly asleep, and later has no memory of speaking.

Eventually it becomes clear that an evil presence is taking over the character. The character's features and mannerisms gradually become more snakelike (slitted eyes, darting tongue, hissing noises, etc.). Magical attempts to free the character who has become Set's servant have only limited results. (A *remove curse* spell, for example, transfers the effect to another PC.)

Upon entering the tomb (see page 35), Set's servant will fall into a brief but intense sleep. Upon awakening, he or she will suddenly remember the words that Kematef whispered in the dream. The character will know all of the powers of the *staff*, and the command words to trigger them. The character will *not*, however, know the history of Sachmet and Kematef. Once Sachmet has been bound in magical sleep and resealed within her tomb, Set releases his hold upon his servant. The PC returns to normal.

The PCs are free to examine the *staff* in any way they see fit, so long as the chosen servant is allowed to hold it. Divinations such as *detect magic* and *identify* reveal only the *staff's* ordinary powers as a *staff of the serpent*; they reveal nothing of the *staff's* history or Sachmet's spell of retirement.

Othmar Returns

Upon leaving the forest, the PCs immediately encounter Prince Othmar and his 12 knights. (They have been pretending to hunt on the plains nearby, all the while waiting for the PCs to emerge from the woods.) The prince looks remarkably well rested compared to the last time the PCs saw him. Read the following screened text to the players to set the scene.

Finding your way out of the forest proves to be quicker and simpler than the way in. Wary of traps, you find your way out without difficulty. Soon, you are in the open grasslands again, but to your surprise, there is a welcoming committee. It's Prince Othmar and his bodyguards. The Prince seems extremely pleased to see you. A genuine smile creases his face, and he positively beams at you

"I thought it best to remain nearby, lest you require any assistance. You might have encountered any number of difficulties, after all, such as remembering where to go to complete your part of our bargain." The prince throws back his head and laughs heartily. "It seems that you've done me a double service. That accursed staff seems to prefer you over me. But don't worry, I'm not offended."

The prince is more than willing to allow the PCs to keep the *staff*, as he has quickly surmised the source of his nightmares. He offers the PCs his insincere regrets about their slumbering comrade.

Sharp PCs will recall that Othmar used an herbal draught to stay awake. However, if the PCs missed this detail, Othmar mentions it himself. He is more than willing to sell the group his entire supply—enough for a month. Ideally, he wants the PCs' entire share of the recovered tribute. In return, the PCs get the *staff* (obviously very magical, Othmar points out) and the draught. The PCs can bargain with him, but the prince must end up with at least half the tribute.

One dose of the Othmar's potion lasts eight hours. While under its effects, the PC still feels sleepy, but can remain awake as long as he or she remains occupied with some task: eating, talking, fighting, reading, riding a mount, etc. The PC still falls asleep if he or she does nothing, and must be awakened with a slap or shake or loud noise. Remember that the *staff's* victim becomes wide awake upon entering Sachmet's tomb.

The Second Awakening

Faced with a companion who has obviously been adversely affected by the staff, the PCs should, at Prince Othmar's suggestion, seek answers from Sir Hiregaard, the person who discovered it. The next logical step, then, is to travel to his castle, and any of the folk of Nova Vaasa can direct the PCs to it.

This encounter takes place as the PCs are crossing the plains. It is assumed that the PCs are on horseback. If not, the DM will need to adjust the following description, which should be read aloud to the players.

As you ride across the plains, you hear the gentle whisper of the wind and smell the sweet scent of the grass. But soon the weather begins to change. The wind gradually fades until at last it dies altogether, and the grass becomes still. The sky fills with dark clouds. There is a sudden flash of lightning, a loud crack of thunder, and the skies open. Hailstones as thick as your thumbs come thundering down upon your heads.

The horses whinny and swivel their ears, alarmed by the sudden onslaught. The air around you grows dark and gloomy; vision is reduced to a few yards in any direction.

Ahead, struggling through the waist-high grass on foot, you spot a human figure. It staggers as if wounded and about to collapse.

Then the wind picks up again. But instead of the sweet smell of grass, it carries the rank rot of the grave.

The figure struggling through the grass is Sachmet. As she approaches, the horses whinny in fear and begin to rear and buck, unseating any riders who fail to make a successful Dexterity check.

This time, Sachmet is being drawn by the *staff*. Since she is only semi-intelligent at this stage, she lashes out mindlessly at anything that stands in her way. If she reaches the *staff*, she stares at it, moaning in anguish (she cannot touch it, as it is an *allergen*; see *Van Richten's Guide to the Ancient Dead*, Chapter V). She yearns to destroy it, but doesn't remember the spells necessary to do the job.

As Sachmet stares at the *staff*, it comes to life. The head hisses and bites her; she suffers damage and screams in pain (thus giving the PCs a clue as to the *staff's* power over her).

If killed, Sachmet crumbles to dust.

Second Awakening: THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6; AC 7; HD 2+2; hp 12; MV 9; SA nil; SD special; MR special; SZ M (5' 6" tall); AL CE; ML unsteady (6); XP 800

"Awake!" she cried, "thy true love calls,
Come from her midnight grave
Now let thy pity hear the maid
Thy love refused to save."

–David Mallett

Eventually, the PCs arrive at Castle Faerhaaven, located 5 miles northwest of the city of Kantora. (For a brief description and drawing of the castle, see the *Realm of Terror* rule book in the RAVENLOFT *Campaign Setting* boxed set.)

Sir Hiregaard greets them graciously, offering them the hospitality of his home. He is unaware of anything that might have passed between the PCs and Prince Othmar, and Hiregaard is normally a courteous host.

If the PCs ask about the *staff*, Sir Hiregaard first inquires about their knowledge of the item, then tells the PCs the story of its discovery. Read the following screened text at that time.

"Unfortunately, I can tell you very little about the staff, except to say that it was discovered by workers in my quarry at the Koshka Bluffs. When it was first unearthed, I had my wizard, Sofya, give it a quick examination. It was she who discovered it was magical.

"Sofya might be able to tell you more about the staff, but none of the workers at the quarry have seen her for the past two days. With everything that has been happening at the quarry lately, I can't help but worry that something has happened to her. But you know how wizards are—they can be very unpredictable. The last time she disappeared from the quarry, it was only to go off into the hills, collecting ingredients for her spells."

If the PCs ask questions, Sir Hiregaard relates some or all of the following:

- "Over the years, the quarry has claimed its share of lives—rock falls, workers who slip from the scaffolding, that sort of thing. But the accidents began to increase dramatically a short time ago, around the time that we started finding strange objects in the rubble."
- "The first items to turn up were ceramic statues of cats. Most were broken by the tumble of rock from our mining, but a few were intact. They appeared ancient. I think that they may have been left as offerings by people who once worshipped plains cats. I let the workers keep them as curiosities."
- "After the first few finds, the workers increased the pace of their work, convinced that other treasures could be found within the bluffs. I had to assign soldiers to stand watch, lest anything valuable be spirited away.

"It proved to be a wise move. In addition to the staff, we uncovered a strange-looking shield that I believe may be magical."

- "In addition to the accidents, several workers have met gruesome fates that cannot be explained. A few days ago, we found five men whose bodies were battered beyond recognition. A strange rot had set in, and so we burned the bodies.

"The only man to survive said they were attacked by a creature from beyond the grave. Other workers have disappeared without trace. At first we thought they were victims of the giant cats that prowl the plains at night. But some whisper that the same creature carried them away."

- "One worker tells an even stranger tale. He claims that one of the giant cats spared his life when he held one of the ceramic figurines out to the beast. The cat took it in its mouth, turned, and padded away."
- "Work at the quarry is almost at a standstill. Something has to be done. Can you help me?"

If the PCs ask about the shield, proceed to the "Tomb Treasure" section on page 29.

Sir Hiregaard/Malken

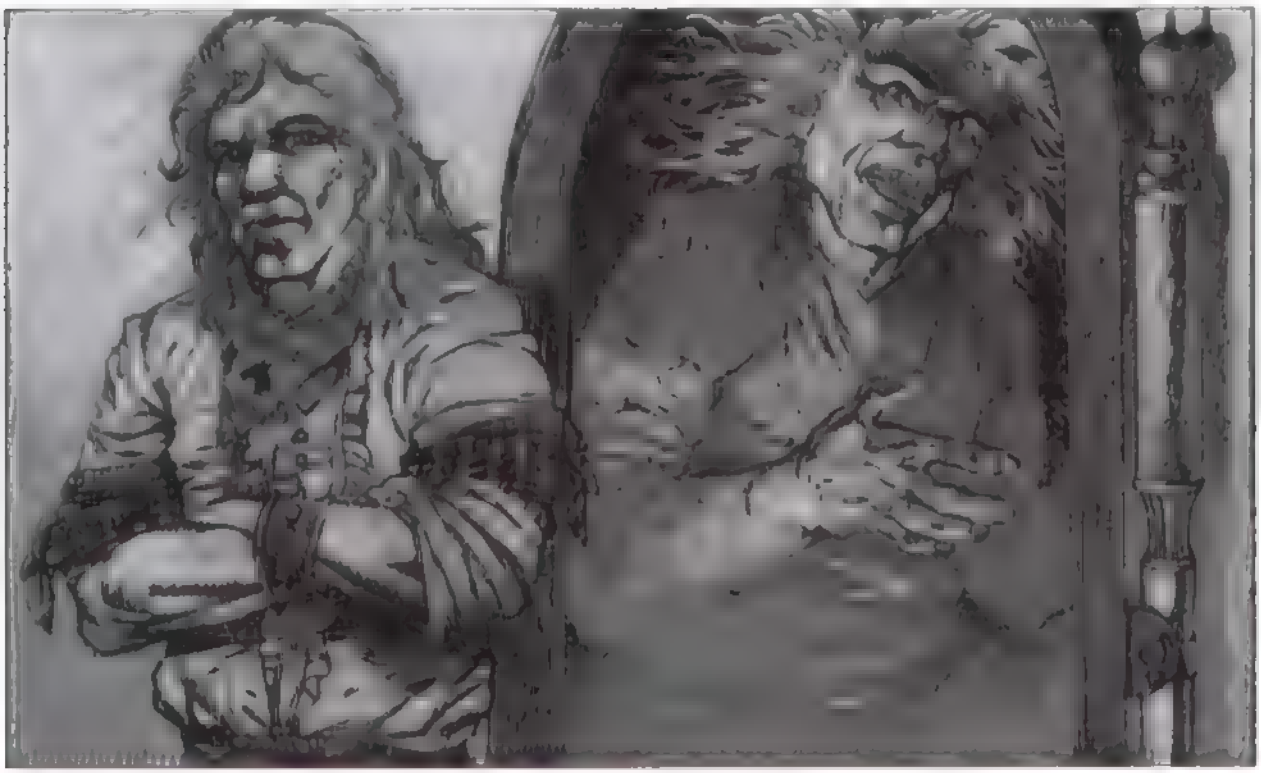
Lord of Nova Vaasa
7th-level Warrior, Lawful Neutral/Chaotic Evil

Armor Class	2	Str	17
Movement	12	Dex	15
Level/Hit Dice	7	Con	12
Hit Points	52	Int	13
THAC0	14	Wis	14
No. of Attacks	3/2 rounds	Cha	18/3
Damage/Attack	By weapon		
Special Attacks	Weapon specialization		
Special Defenses	See below		
Magic Resistance	Nil		

Sir Tristen Hiregaard is a tall, muscular man with dusky skin, raven-black hair, and a thick moustache whose ends are waxed into stiff points. His face is set in a stern expression, but there is compassion in his dark eyes. He appears to be in his early 50s, due to his dark hair. In fact, he is 65 years of age

Tristen dresses in loose black trousers, high black riding boots, and a bright red shirt. The yellow scarf he wears around his neck is embroidered with red and black horses; scarves patterned with diagonal bands of red and black are tied around his upper arms.

Background: Tristen Hiregaard was the first son of Romir Hiregaard, a princely knight of Vaasa, a principality on a distant world in the Prime Material Plane. His father taught him the arts of riding, weaponry, and war, as well as the nobles' code, which proscribed strict rules for interactions between peasants and nobles, and between a noble and his prince. Romir Hiregaard was an honest, fair ruler, but he had one fatal flaw–if he even imagined his young wife to be unfaithful to him, he would fly into an insane rage. One day, he caught his wife in the arms of another man. In a fit of rage, Romir killed them both. Only later did he learn that the man had innocently been teaching his wife how to waltz.



With her dying breath, Romir's wife cursed him. From that day on, he would kill any woman he fell in love with, or any man that crossed him. Unable to face up to his evil deed, though, Romir killed himself and the curse was transferred to his son.

The curse did not manifest itself until Tristen first fell in love, at age 15. The victim was a fair-haired peasant girl who worked as a servant in the family castle. The crime was quickly hushed up (for Tristen was the head of his noble household), but it left the young boy with deep emotional scars. He was by nature and training both honest and compassionate. Even so, he had *enjoyed* killing the girl, though he felt great remorse about it later. Not realizing his actions to be the result of a curse, Tristen believed himself to be a man prone to violent jealousy, like his father. After three years and six killings, he decided to kill himself.

By now, the dark powers of Ravenloft had noticed Tristen, and their hold on him had strengthened with each new killing. Tristen was pulled into the Ravenloft world, and his personality split in two.

Sir Hiregaard is of lawful neutral alignment, but his alter-ego, known to the people of Nova Vaasa as Malken, is a chaotic evil killer who feeds upon Hiregaard's secret jealousies, murdering the women Sir Hiregaard loves and men who stand in the way of his desires.

Current Sketch: Sir Hiregaard is head of his noble family, which controls and exacts tribute from the farmlands along the Dnar River and the city of Liara. Unlike Nova Vaasa's other noble families, the Hiregaards treat their peasants with fairness and dignity. On occasion, Sir Hiregaard has even been known to show kindness. At the yearly councils, he argues for fairer taxes, pointing out the burden that taxation imposes upon the peasants. These arguments always fall upon deaf ears.

Sir Hiregaard rarely has an opportunity to put his charitable impulses into practice. Bound by a strict set of rules that demand obedience to his ruler and his laws, he collects every coin of tax due. He is never brutal in his collection methods, but he is always very, very thorough. Some of his peasants revere him as their champion, while others despise him as much as they would any tyrant.

Sir Hiregaard is a ladies' man, and many women—peasants and nobles alike—vie for his favors, for he showers them with expensive gifts. Others do their best to avoid his attention. After all, several of his past lovers have died mysterious, violent deaths.

Sir Hiregaard lives in Castle Faerhaaven with his wife Katya and his sons Yorgi, Sasha, and Myar (all in their early 40s), plus their wives and children. He does not love Katya. He married her out of a sense of duty, and to gain an alliance with the Chekiv family. She tolerates his many lovers, for she loves him passionately and is blind to his faults.

To all appearances, Sir Hiregaard is simply one of the real heads of the noble households that pay allegiance to Prince Othmar. In fact, Sir Hiregaard is the real lord of this domain—although he himself does not realize it.

Whenever he begins to feel stirrings of jealousy or anger, Sir Hiregaard orders his guards to lock him in his personal chambers, high in the master's tower of Castle Faerhaaven. There, sometimes for days on end, he waits until his passions have cooled. He believes that he can control his rages in this fashion, and that he has made a new life for himself in Nova Vaasa, but he is wrong. In fact, Hiregaard undergoes a hideous transformation when the rages strike. His hair becomes stark white, his frame gnarled and misshapen. His pockmarked face twists into a leer and his eyes burn with fury. He becomes the fiend Malken.

Combat: Sir Hiregaard is proficient in four weapons: the long sword, composite short bow, horseman's pick, and horseman's mace. He has specialized in the mancatcher. When using this unusual weapon, he gets two attacks per round, gains a +1 bonus to his attack rolls, and enjoys a +2 bonus to his damage rolls (in addition to his normal Strength bonus). Malken shares

these proficiencies, although he prefers to attack his victims with his bare hands.

Sir Hiregaard's long sword is a *+4 defender*. Its hilt ends in a silver horse's head. He wears *+2 chain mail* armor.

Hiregaard commands 60 footsoldiers (1st-level fighters) equipped with ring mail, short swords, and shields. He also commands 20 knights (3rd-level fighters) who fight on horseback with horseman's picks or maces, armored in scale mail.

Should Sir Hiregaard be killed, his curse will attach itself to Yorgi, the oldest of his three sons. A new "Malken" will be born, and his first act will be the killing of Yorgi's wife. Should Yorgi die, the curse will be transferred to Sasha, and then to Myar. After that, the curse will work its way through Yorgi's two sons (both in their early 20s) and then through the three teenage sons of Sasha and finally the 10-year-old son of Myar. Only when the last of Tristen's male descendants is dead will the curse be lifted. (Of course, with Hiregaard's womanizing ways, there might be illegitimate sons out there. . . .)

Breaking the Curse: The Hiregaard curse can be broken only if Sir Hiregaard (or the person currently suffering the curse) is stabbed through the heart by a woman who truly loves him.

Tomb Treasure

After talking to the PCs (and probably in response to their curiosity about the shield from the quarry), Hiregaard leads them to one of the four turrets that line the tower's upper walkway. (Use **Map 2: Guards' Tower**, found on the inside cover.) Unlocking the door, he directs them into a small, round room. Inside are a number of locked chests. He strides to one chest and brushes aside two cats that are curled up on top of it. He unlocks the chest and pulls a battered shield from it. Immediately, the two cats begin to meow, standing up on their hind legs to paw at the shield.

The shield is round and made entirely of brass. Embossed on its face, around the rim, are a series of cats. Five of the cats are sleeping, while four more are standing erect, one paw raised as if to strike.

The Shield of Life Restoration: This item was created by the priestesses of Bast for the defenders of the holy city of Bubastis. To cats, the shield smells like catnip, and any domestic cat within 10 feet of it immediately begins to purr and rub against it as if *charmed*. (Larger felines can save vs. spell with a +2 bonus to avoid this effect.) The shield's major function is to restore life. Anyone who dies while holding it is *resurrected* if the shield is placed upon their body and the word "Bast" is spoken. The recipient, upon succeeding a resurrection survival check, is immediately restored to full hit points and can perform strenuous activity. Each time the shield is used, one of the cats embossed on it falls asleep. The shield has four charges left.

If Set's servant is with the PCs, he or she immediately feels an overwhelming aversion toward the shield. The character demands that it be destroyed and tries to convince the other PCs to do so.

Emerging from the room, the PCs are surprised by Sachmet, who appears without warning over the crenelated wall of the tower. This time she is trying to recover the shield that was stolen from her tomb; she concentrates her attack upon the person holding it.

The battle on the guard's tower should be brief. Sachmet is still a fairly weak monster and should be easy for the PCs to deal with.

Sachmet (Third Awakening): THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 (×2); AC 6; HD 3+3; hp 16; MV 12; SA *wand of Bast*, dread; SD special; MR nil; SZ M (5′ 6″ tall); Int low (5); AL CE; ML avg (8); XP 975.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap lay stone on stone,
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish t'were done

–Matthew Arnold

This portion of *The Awakening* takes place at the Koshka Bluffs, which house the tomb of Sachmet. Once, the east and west bluffs were a single, gigantic statue; now they appear to be nothing more than two weathered and broken hills. But hidden inside are a number of chambers, passageways, and staircases, protected by powerful magic and deadly traps.

If the PCs do not meet Sir Hiregaard, or do not agree to visit the quarry after they meet him, the PC who is the servant of Set is continually plagued by visions of this place. A subtle vision might simply include an impression of workers toiling away in the quarry. If the PCs need a stronger hint, the chosen PC has a long dream in which cats emerge from the quarry and hunt down the party. When the PC awakens, he or she remembers the path the cats took, and can easily retrace their steps.

The bluffs, canyon, quarry, and camp are shown on **Map 3: The Koshka Bluffs**, found on the poster map.

The Bluffs: The bluffs are an unusually smooth rock formation, sloping gently up to a rounded, 1,000-foot–high summit. Here and there, crevices in the granite have trapped soil, and tufts of yellow grass, low bushes, and small trees grow.

The Canyon: A canyon, its walls nearly 1,000 feet high, runs between the two bluffs. The floor of the canyon is choked with rubble, and there are frequent rockfalls, making the area highly dangerous.

The canyon walls are pockmarked with a number of crevices and caves. While some of these provide access to portions of Sachmet's tomb, they have never been explored. They are inhabited by fierce plains cats that would quickly make a meal out of the curious.

Normally, plains cats live solitary lives, choosing caves that are some distance from another cat's lair. But the big cats are drawn to the Koshka Bluffs by a silent call only they can hear. While in the area of the bluffs, the big cats forego their usual territorial squabbles. Nearly every cave in the canyon is the lair of a plains cat.

The Quarry: The Hiregaard lands include both of the Koshka Bluffs. The south "arm" of the western bluff is the site of the current quarry. Normally, an army of approximately 250 laborers (0-level humans) toils here. Many are exfarmers who have been forced to labor at the quarry.

The initial cuts in the stone are made by the wizard Sofya, using the *transmute rock to mud* spell. (Sofya mysteriously vanished two days ago.) The laborers then split the stone into blocks and load it onto wagons.

The Workers' Camp: Five shifts of workers (50 per-shift) live in a camp between the two "arms" of the west bluff. They are housed in rough buildings erected from rejected, rough-cut stone. Dozens of wagons stand ready to haul away the good stone; most are half-full. The powerful draft horses that pull the wagons are stabled in a row of crude buildings.

On a normal work day, the camp contains about 50 off-shift laborers and 30 workers who serve as cooks, horse grooms, and tinkers. There are also about 40 footsoldiers (1st-level fighters) equipped with ring mail, short swords and shields, who protect the laborers from prowling plains cats. The soldiers also discipline the workers when the pace at the quarry slows down, or when a theft or brawl occurs. The soldiers are commanded by Jiscaard, a knight.

Jiscaard (F4): THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (axe); AC 9, 6 w/ studded leather; hp 21; MV 12; ML elite; AL LN; S 15, D 15, C 13, I 13, W 10, C 12; Personality: Self-important, officious

The camp also contains three rough taverns, each capable of seating 50 people comfortably. The workers are only allowed to indulge on one day out of every five, on their shift's day off, but transgressions are frequent. Shifts are marked by scarf color, and wearing a false scarf is a common ruse.

The Slumbering Serpent

When the PCs arrive at the quarry, they are assigned beds in one of the soldiers' barracks (See (BB) Map 4: Barracks (EB), found on the inside cover). Soon after their arrival, they discover that the PC who has become Set's servant has suddenly disappeared. (Perhaps they left the PC sleeping while they were unpacking, and he or she awakened unexpectedly and wandered off.) The DM should play up this disappearance by announcing it in a sinister tone of voice. Quarry workers react with dread if they hear of it—too many strange things have been happening lately. After a frantic search, the PCs find Set's servant a short distance away, sleeping on a jumble of broken rock at the edge of the camp. Read the following to the players

> Just ahead, you hear snoring. You see (PC's name), sprawled on the ground in a deep sleep, clutching the staff. Lying nearby is the body of a large, black, tailless cat.
>
> You take a step forward, but immediately draw back as you hear a hissing sound. Before you can move, dozens of snakes slither out of cracks in the rock and encase your companion's body in a writhing tangle. You watch in horror as the creatures raise their heads, bare their fangs, and hiss a warning at you.

The snakes were drawn by the *staff* to Set's servant. They are nonvenomous; the *staff* itself protected the sleeping character from the plains cat's attack. (A single set of puncture marks mark the cat's body.) As soon as it becomes clear that the PCs mean the character no harm, the snakes slither back into the pile of rocks.

Cut Not the Cat

On their first day in the camp, the PCs witness a horrible accident, in which a rockfall kills 10 workers. The survivors grumble about "the curse" and have to be driven back to their rock cutting by club-wielding soldiers.

That night, the PCs' rest is interrupted. Read the following to the players.

> You toss and turn in your bed, trying in vain to fall asleep. Tension in the air is so thick that you can feel its chill touch upon your skin. It will not let you rest.
>
> Suddenly, a loud scream rips the stillness of the night. Sitting up in your bed, you reach for your weapon. Has the curse claimed another life?
>
> "The cats!" one of the soldiers cries. "They're back. Quickly, before they kill again!"

The soldiers leap out of bed, grabbing swords, shields, and torches, and rush into the night. If the PCs follow them, read the following to the players. (If not, the surviving soldiers will tell the story when they return.)

> Rushing toward the sound of the screams, torches in hand, the soldiers at last come to the base of the bluffs. There the torchlight reveals the hulking bodies of three large cats with glossy black fur. They are pawing the rubble and calling to their fellows with roars that bear a blood-curdling resemblance to human screams. Answering cries come back from the night. (cont.)

One of the giant cats holds a dead snake in its jaws. Another pauses in its digging to pull a snake from a crack between two rocks and bite it in half. But not before the snake can strike. The cat staggers, weakened by venom.

Seeing the cats preoccupied with the snakes, the soldiers rush in to attack. Rather than immediately turning on the humans, the three cats turn to face the bluff. Here, they throw back their heads, emit a horrible screamlike roar, then sit, as if waiting for something.

Plains Cats (3): THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d6; AC 5; HD 4+1; hp 17, 18, 19; MV 15; SA leap, rear claws; SD move silently; MR nil; SZ L (5' long); Int semi (3); AL N; ML avg (10); XP 420 each.

The plains cats fight for only a few rounds before leaping away into the night. Any of the PCs or NPCs who lands a blow upon a plains cat experiences a troubling dream upon returning to bed. He awakens screaming, heart racing in the aftermath of a horrible nightmare. The character will be unable to remember anything about the dream except that it involved reflective eyes, watching from the darkness, or a giant cat's paw about to crush them.

The next morning, laborers preparing the as-yet unquarried north arm for mining make a strange discovery. When the PCs arrive on the scene, read the following to the players.

A soldier beckons you to a spot at the end of the bluff, where the grass has been cleared away to survey the rock. The stone, where it was protected by grass and soil, bears the marks of chisels. Pacing along the bluff, you realize that its entire base was once carved. Then you find a piece of carved stone, shaped like the point of a claw. At the same moment, one of the workers behind you gasps. "Look!" he cries, pointing up at a spot where surveyors are clearing bushes, high on the bluff. "An eye! A giant eye has opened!

The other workers cry out as they see it, too. Where the surveyors have cleared the bushes and grass away, the now-bare hillside seems to be shaped like a round eye, carved on a massive scale. The vertical crack that forms the pupil of the eye is nearly one-quarter of a mile high. Suddenly, you have the uneasy feeling that you are being watched.

The laborers are surly and slow all morning, always looking over their shoulders. That afternoon, another accident occurs. This time, misfortune strikes the workers who were surveying the heights. While descending the bluffs, their rope snaps and five of them plunge to their deaths. Later, the rope is found to be badly frayed along its length, as if it had been chewed.

A short time later, work is again disrupted, this time by a man's anguished scream. Read the players the following.

One of the laborers is running through the camp screaming, his eyes wild and his shirt in rags. He dodges the soldiers, not letting them catch him. He sobs, barely able to get his words out. "The creature!" he howls. "It killed Gorki!"

The man's entire body is covered in scratches, most of them already festering. Foam flies from his lips. "The creature is going to kill us all!" He looks wildly around at his fellow workers, one bloody finger pointing in accusation. "Every one of you who cuts the cat will die!"

By now, the laborers are terrified. No matter what brutalities the soldiers subject them to, they will refuse to "cut the cat."

They begin packing their belongings and leaving the camp in droves. The soldiers try to

force them back to work, but even killing a few laborers as an example has little effect.

As chaos grips the camp, read the players the following.

> Everywhere you look, fights are breaking out in the laborers' camp. The soldiers struggle in vain to prevent the exodus. Nearby, a man and woman are screaming at each other, each tugging on one end of a small leather sack.
>
> "We've got to put it back!" the man shouts.
>
> "Fool!" the woman shouts back. "It's more money than we earn in a year. And we'll never be taxed on it! Or would you rather have our children go hungry?"
>
> "But the money is cursed!" he cries. "Andreovich died in a rockfall the day after he found it. Tasha drowned in her washing tub. Mikhail was mauled by one of the big cats. All three owned the coins at the time. Think, woman! Are a handful of coins worth your life? We've got to give them back to the cat!"

The sack contains 18 gold coins. (They are identical to the coin described on page 15.) If the PCs approach, the man throws the coins at them, screaming, "Take them! They're yours now!" Then he grabs his wife's arm and drags her away. "Come, Marta! We're free of the curse!"

By late afternoon, all but a handful of the laborers have fled. The rough houses they once occupied are empty, and the streets between them are littered with trash.

The laborers kept a few pets. Some had mangy dogs for companionship, while others kept singing birds in cages or had the odd cat. But now the streets are crawling with cats. Reflective eyes stare out from windows and doorways. Cats watch every move the PCs make, slinking silently away if threatened. Eerie yowling noises fill the air, and the PCs often hear the sound of a cat scratching at a door. Yet when the door is opened, there is nothing there. At other times, rooms that were empty just a moment before are suddenly filled with cats (especially if the room contains food!).

These are ordinary domestic cats, but they display an almost human intelligence. They stand up on hind legs to open doors and turn window latches, knock over jars to drink the milk inside, and open cupboards to get at dried meats. They roam the streets in purposeful groups, moving in unison as if obeying silent commands. If the PCs go to sleep, they awaken to find a cat sitting on one character's chest, staring intently into the character's face.

Whichever of the PCs is carrying the *shield of life restoration* is surrounded by a constant cluster of about a dozen cats. They wind around his legs, causing the PC to trip and stumble.

The DM should play up the strangeness of the cats' behavior, constantly reminding the PCs that they feel as if they are being watched. At night, the PCs can hear the screamlike roars of the plains cats, somewhere in the distance.

Eventually, one of the soldiers (if a PC doesn't do so first) snaps. Unable to take the strain, he lashes out at one of the cats that has crept into the barracks where the PCs are quartered. As soon as a cat is injured, read the following description to the players. (Use **Map 4: Barracks**, found on the inside cover.)

> The injured cat meows pitifully, its eyes fastened accusingly on the person who attacked it. Then the eyes glaze, and the cat falls heavily to its side.
>
> Out of the corner of your eye, you catch a stealthy movement. At the same time, you hear a faint hiss. Looking around, you see that dozens of cats have somehow crept into the room. They stare at you from table tops, rafters and window sills, their backs arched and eyes narrowed to slits. Their fur and tails are fluffed in fighting mode, but they remain absolutely still, watching you.
>
> Then you hear a faint scratching at the door—the sound of a cat wanting to be let in.

Seconds later, the door crashes in, tearing one of its hinges from the door frame. Standing in the splintered doorway is the undead Sachmet, accompanied by a handful of crypt cats.

Sachmet (Fourth Awakening): THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 (×2); AC 5; HD 5; hp 27; MV 12; SA magical items, dread; SD special; MR 10%; SZ M (5′ 6″ tall); Int low (7); AL CE; ML steady (11); XP 1,400.

Sachmet immediately attacks the person who killed the cat. (If anyone tried to protect the cat or heal it before it died, she ignores them, not attacking unless they attack her first.) Sachmet also attacks anyone possessing items taken from her tomb. If Set's servant is in the room and wielding the *staff*, she keeps as far away from that character as possible; she knows the *staff* is dangerous to her.

During the fight, the normal cats mill around the room, doing their best to get in the way of the PCs and prevent them from attacking Sachmet. (Fighters must make a successful Dexterity check or suffer a –1 penalty on their attack and damage rolls.) If anyone is attempting to cast a spell, a swarm of cats begin to climb that person's body like a tree, inflicting 1–2 points of damage per round unless the PC does nothing except fight them off. The PCs are also hampered by the crypt cats, which attack under Sachmet's command.

This time, Sachmet is not merely fighting to recover items stolen from her tomb. She has enough intelligence to understand that the PCs are a threat to her and will continue attacking them until she is destroyed; if turned, she waits for the next possible chance to attack.

By now, it should be clear that the source of the curses and the attacks by undead lies within the bluffs. And this time, instead of teleporting, Sachmet simply exited her tomb by walking out the entrance that Gorki and his companion found. Even without tracking skills, it is a simple job to follow Sachmet's trail back to this entrance.

Here, at the spot where the staff was found, a large bronze door, green with verdigris, stands temptingly open.

Wrapt in the shade of night
the goddess lies
Yet to the learn'd unveils
her dark disguise
—Sir Samuel Garth

Sachmet's final resting place was an magnificent sight when it was first constructed. A gigantic statue 14 miles long and an average of 4 miles wide, it was a wonder of her world.

The quarry excavations have removed large portions of the statue. Excavations on the cat's left "paw" exposed one of the inside rooms—it was here that the ceramic cat figurines, crypt cat coffin, and coins were found. Still other treasures were crushed in the fall of rock. At the same time, the corridors beyond the room collapsed, making them impassable.

Although the exterior of the statue is weathered and broken, its interior passageways and chambers are still intact–as are their traps and magical wards. Only where a corridor crosses the broken midsection of the statue is it choked with rubble and dust. (**Map 3: The Koshka Bluffs**, found on the poster map, provides an overview of the interior.)

The original entrance to the tomb was through the mouth of the cat. The face of the statue has been destroyed, but the bronze door that marks the entrance is still intact. It was against this door that the *staff of Set* was placed, sealing Sachmet inside her tomb and preventing her from rising from the dead.

Replacing the *staff* seals the door against Sachmet, but that will not prevent her from leaving the tomb. She simply exits via the canyon. Special conditions must be met before the *staff* can be used to retire Sachmet. (See "Sealing the Tomb," page 59.)

All corridors and passageways in the statue are 5 feet wide and 8 feet high, with rounded ceilings. Some of them are crawling with jermlaines; see pages 41–43 for encounters with those creatures. Otherwise, roll 1d6 for each mile of corridor and consult the table below; a result of 1 indicates an encounter.

Common	Rare
Centipede, giant	Crypt cat
Mammal, small (cat)	Scorpion, large
Plains cat	Mold, brown
Snake, poisonous or normal	Ooze, gray
Spider, large	

Staircases are steep and narrow, with steps that are 6 inches wide, with 6-inch risers. Any character trying to run down a staircase or fight on it must make a successful Dexterity check or tumble helplessly for 1d4 × 10 feet, suffering 1d4 points of damage for every 10 feet of tumbling. (Equipment that is dropped or lost in the fall might continue to tumble down the stairs for another 1d10 × 10 feet, making a horrible clatter.) Those in the path of the falling person must also make a successful Dexterity check in order to avoid falling, too.

The rooms have been carefully finished. Walls and ceilings are smooth, plastered, and painted with images of the afterlife (women in starched white kilts and cat-headdresses, watching domestic cats frolicking in a land filled with small game animals). Several major rooms also have hieroglyphic inscriptions.

In most cases, travel through the corridors will be relatively straightforward, albeit time-consuming, since the distances in many cases are measured in miles. Entering and leaving any of the rooms, however, is more difficult.

Each major room has one secret exit that leads deeper into the tomb. Opening it usually involves manipulating a life-sized stone statue of a reclining cat that has been carved in the same shape as the tomb itself.

A Door Unto Death

The first two times that Sachmet left her tomb, she exited via one of the plains cat lairs in the canyon. When she rose for the third time, she used the main door of her tomb, leaving it ajar. This entrance is shown on **Map 5: Tomb Entrance**.

Read the following description to the players as they step inside the tomb.

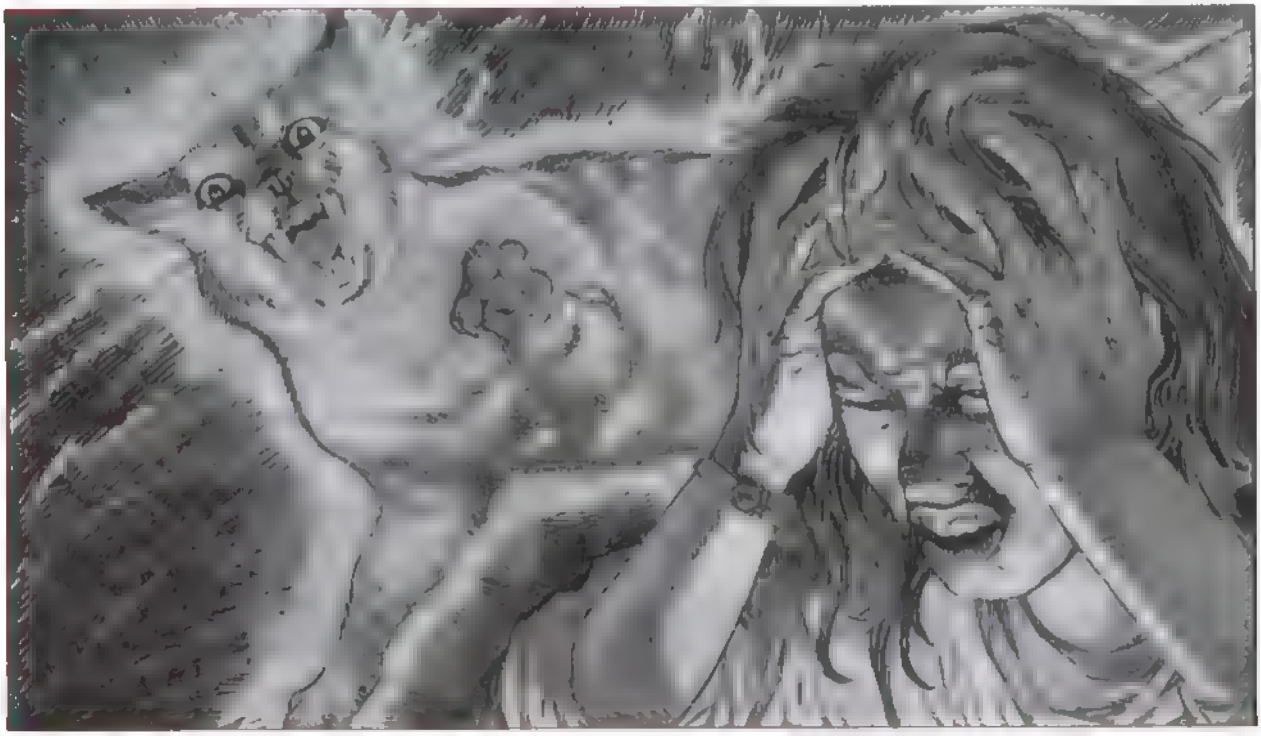
> The heavy bronze door creaks open on protesting hinges. The air inside smells faintly of decay and spice—and blood.
>
> As you stand in the doorway, you can just make out a niche in each of the room's far corners. A box of some sort fills each niche. One of the boxes has been opened; its lid lies on the floor. Directly across from the door is an alcove, filled with a dark, hulking shape. Two red eyes peer out at you, reflecting the light from the doorway.

The "eyes" are rubies, set into the sockets of a granite statue. The statue is carved in the same shape as tomb itself—that of a reclining cat.

Behind the statue lies the body of Gorki, one of two thieves who were posing as laborers while fencing treasure the other workers found in the rubble. His mouth is wide open, and his body is covered with festering scratches. He and his companion (the screaming man) found the open door shortly after Sachmet departed from her tomb. They were attacked by one of the crypt cats that guards this entrance.

Gorki wears a pair of *eyes of comprehending languages*. These wire-framed lenses, which miraculously escaped being broken in the attack, give the person wearing them a 90% chance to understand strange writings.

As soon as the PCs have entered the room, the door swings shut and locks with a loud click. There is a handle on this side of the door (the other side was featureless), shaped like a cat's head, with a keyhole in its mouth. Thieves attempting to pick the lock do so with a 10% penalty, due to the quality of



the lock. Should they fail, the mouth snaps shut, breaking their lock-picking tool.

Each of the niches holds the sarcophagus of a large crypt cat. Both are studded with tiny gems. Several of the gems have been removed from the sarcophagus on the right.

The door to the left of the statue is false. If it is opened, read the following to the players.

> Behind the door is nothing more than a blank stone wall. But then you see movement. A thin stream of mist emerges from the wall. It floats toward you, assuming the shape of a ghostly cat, walking through the air. The ghost-cat licks its lips, then opens its mouth wide.

This sight prompts a horror check, followed by a fear check.

Opening the door triggers a *holy word*. The spell manifests itself in the form of the ghostly cat. Characters within 30 feet of the door (anywhere in the room) must successfully save vs. spell or be *slowed* for 2d4 rounds. Those who fail to save hear the cat meow. Those who save hear nothing. The cat then vanishes.

The two crypt cats who guard this area attack as soon as the *slow* spell takes effect.

Crypt Cats, Large (2): THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8; AC 7; HD 4+1; hp 17, 19; MV 12; SA disease; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (4' long); Int animal (1); AL CN; ML special; XP 650 each.

If the PCs take the time to use the *spectacles of comprehending languages* and read the hieroglyphs on the wall, let them read **Inscription 1** (found on page 64).

The exit from this room is a secret trap door in the center of the floor. It can be opened only by pulling open the hinged jaw of the statue and placing fresh meat inside its mouth. Pulling the jaw all the way down (until it clicks) opens the outer door of the tomb, but there is a price: Those working the jaw to open the outer door suffer a minor curse, and they cannot close their mouths for 1d4 hours or until a *remove curse* spell is cast upon them. (The DM can make the player hold his or her mouth open while the curse affects the PC.)

The trap door provides access to a rusty iron ladder that leads to a secret passage 20 feet below. At the end of the passage, another ladder leads up to a door. Anyone touching the door handle triggers a trap: The center of each rung of the ladder breaks in half, uncasing a wicked-looking blade. PCs on the ladder must make a successful Dexterity check or fall between the blades for a total of 3d4 damage.

Belly of the Beast

There are four possible entrances to Sachmet's tomb along the broken midpoint of the statue. Two lead to corridors in the unfinished rear portion of the statue (the eastern half of the Koshka Bluffs). Each of these corridors ends in a solid rock face after about a mile. Picks and shovels lie against the walls where they were left by the workers.

The other two entrances give access to the western bluff and the portion of the tomb that houses Sachmet's final resting place. Each lair leads to a corridor choked with bits of broken stone; clearing this rubble takes 1d4 turns.

The southern entrance is where the wizard Sofya met her doom. After finding both a magical staff and shield in the quarry rubble, she correctly concluded that there might be more magical treasure inside the bluffs. She was also smart enough to realize that, if she searched for this treasure under the eyes of Sir Hiregaard's soldiers, she would have to turn it over to her lord. So the wizard decided to see if she could find an entrance to the bluffs in the unexplored canyon.

The canyon walls are pockmarked with crevices and caves. Spotting the broken passageways will take a keen eye, but it can be done in daylight. Reaching these corridors, however, will be difficult. A total of 28 adult plains cats live in the canyon. During the day, there is a 50% chance that a single plains cat (possibly with one to three

immature young) will be encountered in the canyon, outside of its lair. During the night, the PCs can encounter one or more adult plains cats in the canyon, at the DM's discretion. The PCs must find some way to sneak past the beasts.

During the day, there is a 95% chance that any given lair contains a plains cat. (There is a 20% chance that the animal will be a mother with immature young.) During the night, the chance that a lair is occupied drops to 10%; the cats are out hunting.

Plains Cats (1d4) THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4 1d4/1d6; AC 5; HD 4+1; hp 19 each; MV 15; SA leap, rear claws; SD move silently; MR nil; SZ L (5' long); Int semi (3); AL N; MR nil; SZ L (5' long); ML avg (10); XP 420 each.

The other dangers PCs face in the canyon are frequent rockfalls. For each quarter-mile of travel through the canyon, there is a 10% chance (noncumulative) of a rockfall. Most of these will be minor—a shower of fist-sized stones that inflict 1d4 points of damage. But there's a 25% chance that a huge chunk of rock will detach itself from the canyon walls and come hurtling to the ground. Characters in its path must make a successful Dexterity check or suffer 2d12 points of damage. (Characters can avoid rockfalls altogether by staying at least 100 feet from the canyon walls.)

If the PCs spend at least eight hours systematically searching the caves, they find the lair in which Sofya died. At that point, read the following block of screened text to the players (after they have dealt with any cats found in the lair).

> This cave seems strangely regular in shape, perhaps 5 feet wide and 8 feet high, with a rounded ceiling. The cave itself stretches back about 20 feet before ending in a jumble of stone.
>
> Lying just in front of the collapsed rear of the cave is the body of a woman. Only the upper torso remains intact; the rest has been gnawed down to the bone.
>
> One of the woman's hands is jammed between two rocks. The other still clutches a pry bar. Her face is a twisted mask of terror.

Sofya's backpack lies in one corner of the cave. Its multiple pockets contain a good assortment of spell components, useful to a wizard who specializes in the element of Earth (e.g., corked vials of ground minerals and gemstones, soft clay wrapped in oiled leather, a vial of water that has a sulfuric smell). The pack also contains rope, a bull's eye lantern, five oil flasks, a *potion of extra healing*, and a *potion of invisibility* that Sofya planned to use on her way out of the canyon. (She used up one potion getting in; the empty flask is in her pack.) Her only weapon is a silver dagger, still in its leather sheath.

Sofya carried her traveling spell book in a leather bag that hung at her hip. Most of the pages of the book are shredded and blood-stained, but the following spells are intact: *fist of stone*, *Maximilian's stony grasp*, and *passwall*.

When the plains cat that later ate her attacked, Sofya was reaching between two stones to recover a ring. She believed it to be a *ring of animal control*, but in fact it is a *ring of delusion*. Any character wearing the *ring* (a gold band set with cut glass that to the wearer looks like a favorite gemstone) will believe that it provides the ability to magically control animals. Even when confronted by an animal that is clearly *not* being controlled, the wearer will continue to be deluded unless a saving throw vs. spell can be made.

Divide and Terrify

After entering the tomb, either through the brass door at the mouth of the statue or through the plains cat lairs in the canyon, the PCs will be faced with long journeys down seemingly endless corridors. This encounter can be used in any straight stretch of corridor, regardless of the PCs' direction of travel. (Use **Map 6: Corridors of Isolation**, found on the poster map.)

This section is designed to frighten the players by dividing up the party and pitting each of them, alone, against the mummy and her minions. It begins as the first of the PCs passes point A. Suddenly, a *teleport* spell sends each character to point B in one of the six isolation corridors. The characters then have a moment or two to try and puzzle out where they are before the undead Sachmet appears at point C, either in her human or animal (shapeshifted) form, accompanied by small crypt cats. (For Sachmet's statistics, see "The Mummy: Fifth Awakening," page 12.)

Using her crypt cats to corner the victim, Sachmet uses *cause wounds*, *spiritual claws*, or *cause fear* to play with the PC as a cat would play with a mouse. If the PC proves too difficult to handle, she first casts spells that will place her in control of the character (e.g., *command*, *charm person or mammal*, *enthrall*, *hold person*). After a few moments of tormenting the PC, Sachmet teleports to another isolation chamber—and a fresh victim.

(To avoid lulls in the action, the DM should keep these one-on-one encounters brief, jumping from one player to the next as Sachmet teleports from victim to victim.)

To escape, the PCs must use the secret doors that lead back into the main corridor. The final character to escape emerges into the main corridor with Sachmet in close pursuit. Here, the PCs can at last work together to defeat her.

Read each player one of the following descriptions. (PCs who are not carrying a light source will be in complete darkness, so adjust the description accordingly.)

Corridor 1: Only a moment ago, you were leading your party through a corridor that stretched ahead and behind you, seemingly without end. But now a wall of cold, solid stone has appeared directly behind you. You heard no mechanism, no sounds of doors closing, yet here you are. Your companions have vanished without trace. You are entirely alone, trapped in a blocked-off, silent corridor

Suddenly, you hear a faint scratching noise, coming from somewhere up ahead. Listening carefully, you recognize the sound of claws on stone. The scratching pauses, then comes from behind the wall to your right. Then to your left. Then farther down the hall.

It sounds like several creatures are trying to claw their way into the corridor! And there is nowhere to hide

The secret door is marked by scratches. The PC must scratch on the wall to open it.

Corridor 2: You find yourself alone in a room so small your outstretched hands can touch the hard stone wall on either side. The ceiling is uncomfortably low, perhaps an inch above your head. All sound is muffled; you hear only your own breathing and your own heartbeat. Then you hear a low, rumbling noise.

The ceiling begins to slowly descend until the character is pinned between it and the floor. At this point, two small crypt cats teleport in and begin "washing" the PC's skin with foul smelling, moldering tongues.

Eventually tiring of tormenting the character, the crypt cats open the secret door by pushing against the wall and crawling out on their bellies. The door remains open; the PC can wriggle through it by making a successful Strength check.

Corridor 3: You feel a moment of dizziness. When your mind clears, your companions have vanished. A moment ago you were walking down a corridor that ran straight ahead as far as the eye could see. Now the corridor ends a short distance ahead, where it joins with another at right angles. And you are not alone. From somewhere behind you comes a faint, echoing meow

Although the secret door is made of stone, a tactile illusion causes anyone touching it to believe that portion of the wall is covered in soft fur. Stroking the fur opens the secret door.

Corridor 4: Suddenly the corridor plunges into complete darkness. At the same time you stumble, as if you were descending a flight of steps and missed the last one

The intersection is enveloped in a *darkness, 15 radius* spell. By feeling about, the PC can quickly determine that this is a point where two corridors cross. At this point, add the following.

From the corridor to your right, you hear an eerie whisper: "(PC's name)," the ghostly voice calls. "This way."

Each time the PC takes a step toward a particular corridor, the voice shifts, whispering, "No, this way!" from another direction. Soon whispers come from all four directions at once.

A stone lion's head, animated by a *magic mouth* spell, is set in the wall at the end of each corridor. To open the secret door the PC must force the appropriate lion's mouth shut.

Corridor 5: The corridor erupts in a sudden flash of light. You stand, blinking a moment, unable to see. At last you recover enough of your sight to peer into the gloom. The corridor behind you is absolutely empty, and stretches on, as it did before, into darkness. Just ahead, the corridor narrows to a tunnel that looks just large enough for you to crawl through.

Suddenly, you hear dragging, uneven footsteps. A faint breeze wafts down the tunnel, carrying the foul odor of rot. A menacing figure looms out of the darkness, heading straight for you

If the PC enters the tunnel, add the following.

You worm your way through the tunnel, hoping that the horror behind you is too big to fit inside. You pray that the tunnel leads to another corridor; if you have to back out, you will be defenseless

The tunnel curves to the right and keeps on curving. The farther you crawl, the tighter it gets. You round yet another bend—and find yourself face to face with a nest of snakes They rear up, hissing, jaws gaping wide

The snakes are nonvenomous. The secret door is marked by a faint purring noise; anyone pressing an ear to the wall will hear it. The door opens when the PC imitates a cat's purr.

Corridor 6: In the blink of an eye, a stone wall appears in front of you. Before you can stop walking, you bump into it, hitting your nose. A thin line of blood trickles down onto your upper lip

A moment ago, the corridor was straight Now it twists and turns. Your companions are nowhere in sight. On the dusty floor, you see a single set of footprints–those of a huge cat Then you hear a low growl behind you

At this point, the PC must make a fear check or flee in panic. Sachmet's crypt cats chase the PC around in circles, wearing the character out, before the mummy herself attacks.

The secret door is marked by dusty paw prints on the wall. It is opened simply by pushing upon it

Each method of opening the secret doors/ escape routes mentioned above is only a suggestion. Any clever attempt or well role played fit of panic can be rewarded with freedom, at the DM's discretion.

TERROR ON TINY FEET

ome, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace
The baiting place of wit the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release

—Sir Philip Sidney

When the tomb of Sachmet was deposited in Ravenloft and the statue broke in half, a number of cracks formed in the rock. Over the years, the jermlaine that inhabit Nova Vaasa have claimed these tiny passageways and chambers as their own.

As the PCs enter an area in which jermlaine make their lairs, they begin to hear high-pitched squeaks and twitters. One or two rats, frightened by the PCs, scurry down the corridor. (Rats are completely absent elsewhere in the tomb; the plains cats that occasionally wander in quickly devour them.) Tiny eyes peer out of cracks in the walls and ceiling, and there are strange rustling noises everywhere.

If the PCs take more than one day to explore the tomb and must bed down for the night, the jermlaine immediately take advantage of the situation. Otherwise, they use a unique magical item, *dust of drowsiness*, to magically induce sleep. They scurry along tiny cracks in the ceiling, sprinkling it down upon the PCs.

Dust of Drowsiness: This grayish powder looks like fine sand. When it comes into contact with skin, it causes immediate drowsiness. Those it has touched must successfully save vs. paralysis with a –4 penalty or fall into a deep sleep that lasts for 4d4 rounds. Slapping or wounding awakens affected creatures or characters, but normal noise does not. Awakening requires one entire round.

Once their victims are asleep, the jermlaine begin to investigate the PCs' equipment and test the mettle of these intruders. The jermlaine make no attacks at this time; they prefer to utilize the ambushes they have set up elsewhere in the corridors.

Each time the PCs fall asleep (whether it is normal sleep or magically induced) they wake up to find things slightly awry. The DM can choose from any of the jermlaine encounters below

- The PCs wake up to find one of their magical items lying on the floor. Tiny hand prints (each no larger than a human thumb print) can be detected on the item if it is examined carefully. The first time it is used, the item will be discovered to have lost its magical abilities. (The DM usually should select a magical item that is of only minor importance to the PCs.)
- The PCs wake up to discover that one of their backpacks has been rifled. A few of the smaller pieces of equipment are missing, and there are tiny bite marks in the food stored within. A trail of crumbs leads to a crack in the wall. Just outside the crack is a piece of stolen equipment that was too large to fit inside the hole
- One of the PCs feels something tickling his (or her) feet and wakens to find that tiny, baggy-skinned humanoids with pointed heads have removed his boots and are attempting to tie his ankles together. Alternatively, a PC feels something touching his head and wakens to find these humanoids in the process of cutting his hair. (The jermlaine use the hair to provide their lairs with soft bedding.) The jermlaine flee into cracks in the wall as soon as the PC awakens.

Rats in a Trap

For years, the jermlaine sustained themselves by eating the snakes that were drawn into Sachmet's tomb by the *staff of Set*. When the *staff* was removed and the snake population started to decline, the jermlaine went hungry. But then they spotted the undead Sachmet wandering the corridors. Convinced that this activity heralded the return of humans to the tomb, the jermlaine constructed elaborate ambushes, making use of the traps that already existed within the statue. They are careful not to use traps on the plains cats that roam the halls, for undead creatures attacked the last group of jermlaine that tried to kill a cat. But the jermlaine will not hesitate to attack the PCs, whom they will quite happily butcher and eat.

The map showing the jermlaine ambush sites is on the poster map. The smaller passages are just 14 inches high and 8 inches wide—too small for most PCs to enter. (The DM can position these ambushes anywhere a corridor or staircase has the appropriate configuration.) Each encounter involves a tribe of jermlaine, one elder, and a handful of the rats these tiny humanoids keep as pets.

Jermlaine (49): THAC0 20; Dmg 1–2 (dart) or 1d4 (miniature pike); AC 7; HD 1/2; hp 3 each; MV 15; SA ambush, stealth; SD special; MR special SZ T (1' tall); Int avg (10); AL NE; ML steady (12); XP 15 each, elder 65.

Rats, Common (4): THAC0 20; Dmg 1; AC 7; HD 1/4; hp 1 each; MV 15, SA disease; SD nil, MR nil; SZ T (1' long); Int animal (1); AL N; ML unreliable (3); XP 7 each.

Ambush 1: This trap relies upon a trip wire (1) that sends the victim tumbling into a 10-foot–deep pit (2) for 1d6 points of damage. At the same time, the trip wire triggers the release of a net (3) from the ceiling, trapping those behind the victim. Anyone trapped in the net must spend one round getting untangled from it.

In the meantime, tiny doors slide open near the base of the pit and a swarm of 12 jermlaine and four common rats rushes out. (The doors open *into* the pit only.) The jermlaine attempt to kill the victim and drag their catch off through a larger secret door into the butchering room (4). (This door opens *into* the butchering room only; it is not possible for the victim to escape back through it.) The room is empty, aside from a few snake skeletons.

If all goes well, the jermlaine will hold a feast back in their lair (5).

Ambush 2: As the bait for this trap, one of the jermlaine allows itself to be seen at a spot a few feet from a bend in the corridor (1). It pretends to be wounded, lying on the floor, clutching its side, and squealing. As soon as the PCs come close enough, a trap door opens under the jermlaine and it scurries away to safety.

In the meantime, six jermlaine positioned overhead slide open small trap doors in the ceiling. They attack the PCs by hurling a constant hail of tiny darts. They then close the trap doors and run along a narrow passageway built over the ceiling of the larger corridor to (3).

Unless the PCs retreat (which means they must run the jermlaine gauntlet a second time if they want to continue), they round the corner and find a 25-foot–long pit in the corridor ahead of them (2). It is about 10 feet deep, and is littered with sharp bones.

The bones conceal a net that is stretched across the bottom of the pit. As the first PC tries to cross the pit, the net is pulled up by means of counterweights that the jermlaine release through two trap doors above either end of the pit. The PC is then hauled through a trap door in the ceiling to the room above (3).

Six jermlaine attempt to subdue the victim and steal anything of value. The victim is shaved hairless, bound, and dumped naked back through the trap door. The jermlaine then retire to their lair (4) to divide the loot.

Ambush 3: As the PCs reach a T-junction in the corridor (1), tiny pikes thrust upward from concealed holes in the floor. Each PC suffers 1d4 points of damage per square they transverse, once the attack begins.

The object of the jermlaine attack is to divide the PCs, who have no time to stand around and talk about which way to run. The DM should ask each player separately which direction they run (make them write it down). The players must reply immediately, with little or no discussion between each other. PCs who delay suffer an additional 1d4 points of damage.

No matter which direction the PCs take, they are driven into the next section of the trap. Teams of six jermlaine are positioned in cracks in the walls, each armed with a single man-sized spear. As the PCs pass them, the jermlaine rush forward like soldiers with a battering ram. One spear emerges at human chest height, the other at the appropriate chest-height for a smaller demihuman. Each spear inflicts 1d6 damage upon a successful hit.

If a single PC has run toward Area 2b and appears to be an easy victim, 12 jermlaine swarm out of their lair (3) and drag the PC back through the secret door.

The lair contains two pillars carved into the shape of elongated, sitting cats, and an altar. Inside a secret panel at the base of the altar is a *rod of beguiling* that only affects humanoids. If used against the jermlaine, the wielder will gain an army of tiny followers who will do their best to warn about other jermlaine traps.

If the *rod* is handled by the jermlaine elder (who may steal it when the PCs aren't looking), it loses its magical properties (it nevertheless still can seal the tomb—this property is not magical *per se*). Alternatively, one of the other jermlaine may find/steal the *rod* and inadvertently use it against the PCs.

Ambush 4: The steep staircase the PCs are climbing has several chipped and broken steps (a warning of what is to come). The walls have wide cracks in several places. When they reach a certain point on the stairs (1), the PCs see one jermlaine standing on another's shoulders, trying to reach the handle of a door. Spotting the PCs, both jermlaine flee into a crack opposite the door.

The door closes off a short stairway leading to an empty room (2). The jermlaine have filled this stairway with fist-sized stones. The door is partially ajar, and even touching it will cause it to spring open, releasing a flood of stones.

Any PCs failing a Dexterity check are swept off their feet. Each tumbles for 1d6 × 10 feet, suffering 1d4 points of damage for every 10 feet of tumbling, plus 1d6 points of damage from being buffeted by stones.

Meanwhile, jermlaine with nets stand ready farther down the stairs (3). Here they stretch a net across the staircase, to capture the last of the PCs to come tumbling down. While stunned by the fall and tangled in the net, the captive will be rapidly stripped of anything valuable. Stolen goods will be tossed down into the jermlaine lair (4), and then the net will be hauled in, allowing the PC to continue tumbling down the stairs.

The Lairs: Each of the jermlaine lairs is a jumble of bedding materials (hair, grasses, shredded cloth, bits of fur), equipment (tiny pikes, darts, nets, and ropes), and treasures (valuables pilfered from elsewhere in Sachmet's tomb). Choice cuts of meat (snake, insect, and possibly human) hang from hooks on the ceiling. Tiny pieces of furniture have been made from cat-shaped wooden coffins.

The first lair contains 6,000 silver coins, 44 platinum coins, 9 gems, 1d4 potions—an *elixir of youth*, a *potion of extra-healing*, a *scroll of protection from gas*, and a *scroll of protection from poison*. The coins look like the one described on page 15.

The second lair contains 5,000 silver coins, 45 platinum coins, 8 gems, a *potion of growth* (dangerous in the tunnels!) a *philter of love*, a *scroll of protection from water*, and a scroll containing one *remove paralysis* spell.

I was a dismal and a fearful night
Scarce could the Morn drive on the
unwilling light,
When Sleep, Death's image, left my
troubled breast
By something like Death possest
My eyes with tears and
uncommanded flow
And on my soul hung the dull
weight
Of some intolerable fate

—Abraham Cowley

Having found their way into the statue, the player characters must work their way through a series of rooms to reach the place where Sachmet's body lies. Along the way, the inscriptions in each of the rooms provide clues about how Sachmet's body and soul were preserved.

A Thirst for Justice

In this room, Sachmet's body was mummified with a mixture of clay and magical oil. The room stands ready for use, for the priestesses who laid Sachmet to rest had every reason to believe that they would be returning in the future, to embalm the body of the next high priestess.

The area is shown on **Map 7: Embalming Chambers**, found on the poster map. Entry is through one of two locked doors leading to Room 1. Thieves attempting to pick either lock do so with a 20% penalty, due to the quality of the lock. Failed attempts to pick a lock—or attempts to force a door—arm the cat-shaped pillars inside the room. (The left pillar is armed by the left door, the right pillar by the right door.)

1) Embalming Room: When the player characters venture into the Embalming Room, read the following description aloud to the players.

As the door swings open, you can smell two very different odors. One is a sweet, earthy smell; a fragrance like perfume. The other is the odor of wet rot.

Between the two doors leading into this room is a low altar, heaped with piles of tiny white bones. To either side is a stone pillar carved into the shape of an elongated, sitting cat. Each cat has one eye open. No matter where you stand in the room, they seem to be watching you.

The center of the room is taken up by a low platform. To one side of this is a coffin-sized tray lined with silver and smeared with a thin residue of sweet-smelling, dried mud. To the other side is a round opening, reminiscent of a well. A faint gurgling noise comes from below.

In front of the far wall is a granite statue of a reclining cat. Its eye sockets are empty.

If water is added to the dried mud in the trough, it will form a paste that is capable of healing 1–2 points of damage (one use per person).

The bones on the altar are the skeletons of mice, birds, and other small animals.

If the PCs inspect the cat pillars, they notice that each time they look at one of them, it seems to have a different eye open—first the right, then the left. Apparently magic is at work here, since even those who stare at the statue can't see when the switch occurs.

If either of the cat pillars was armed, touching anything in the room (embalming tray, altar, cat statue, dais, or the pillars themselves) will set off the nearest pillar's attack. Both eyes on the cat pillar open and several multi-colored beams of light emerge from each eye. These pencil-thin beams sweep rapidly across the room. The only protected areas are small triangular shadows behind the altar and central dais (one character can shelter behind each).

Each character touched by the beams must save vs. spell with a –2 penalty. Up to four of those who fail will find that one (or both!) of their eyes have turned to stone. (Attempts to remove the eye inflict 1–2 points of damage.) They

immediately realize that their own eyes have switched places with the stone eyes of the cat pillar. The affected PCs find themselves still able to see, but through an eye that is now permanently affixed in the stone cat's head. (Attempts to remove it are likely to destroy the eye.)

If one eye was lost to the statue, disorientation sets in, and the character suffers a –2 penalty on all rolls requiring eyesight (e.g., attacks). Even walking becomes difficult. Fortunately, the character is able to control the stone cat's eyelid, and closing it removes the disorientation.

Characters who lose both eyes to the statue suddenly see the room (and only the room) from a new, fixed perspective. Closing the eyelids of the stone cat is possible, but it renders the characters fully blind.

If both cat pillars were armed, they have the capability between them to "steal" up to four eyes from the characters in the room. Stone eyes may be restored to normal through any of the following spells: *Dispel magic* restores sight for 1d4 rounds, while *limited wish* restores sight for a full day. *Stone to flesh*, *wish*, and *remove curse* spells restore sight permanently. However, *remove curse* is effective only if cast at 12th level or higher. The priest spells *cure blindness or deafness* and *true seeing* can restore sight to one eye, but it remains stone.

A sliding panel in the altar provides access to passages leading to the broken midsection of the statue (see the "Belly of the Beast" section.) This panel can be easily opened.

A second, secret exit is located in the ceiling, above the central dais. This exit leads to the Silent Chambers (see map 8). It can be opened only by replacing the stone eyes of the statue at the far wall. These eyes can be found in Room 4, and no other gems or eyes will work.

The walls here are covered with hieroglyphs. If the PCs are able to decipher these, let them read **Inscription 2** (found on page 64).

2) Potion Room: A secret door in the wall near the statue affords access to a room in which the priestesses stored the potions used in making embalming mud. The room contains 12 corked vials. Most of them have evaporated, and the contents of one have turned to a mild poison that inflicts 1d4 points of damage. But 1d4 contain any of the following (DM's choice): *elixir of health*, *elixir of youth*, *Murdock's insect ward*, *potion of extra-healing*, *potion of fire resistance*, *potion of healing*, *potion of longevity*, *potion of vitality*, *oil of acid resistance*, *oil of elemental invulnerability*, *oil of preservation*, or *oil of timelessness*.

3) Well Trap: The well in Room 1 leads down 200 feet to a long, narrow room with rounded end walls. The ceiling is just 6 feet high and the room is filled with water that is chest-high on a human. When the PCs reach the room, read the players the following description.

> The room below the well is filled with murky water. Only a foot of airspace remains between the surface of the water and the ceiling. Those portions of the walls and ceiling that you can see are covered with a thick, slippery green algae. The surface of the water is covered with a greenish scum. The air is foul with decay.
>
> The room itself is narrow—just 10 feet wide, although it is more than 100 feet long. The walls seem to press in upon you.
>
> You have descended through the well at one end. In the far wall, you can just make out the algae-encrusted outline of a door.

The following description can be added for anyone tall enough to wade through the water.

> Grimacing at the smell, you lower yourself cautiously into the tepid water, and find that it is chest-high. You can't see the floor of the room through the scum, but you can feel the rubble covering it. Rotten sticks and debris crunch underfoot. You wade carefully across the room, wary of losing your footing.

The "sticks" underfoot are actually bones. When the tomb was nearing completion, those who had crafted its traps and constructed its tunnels

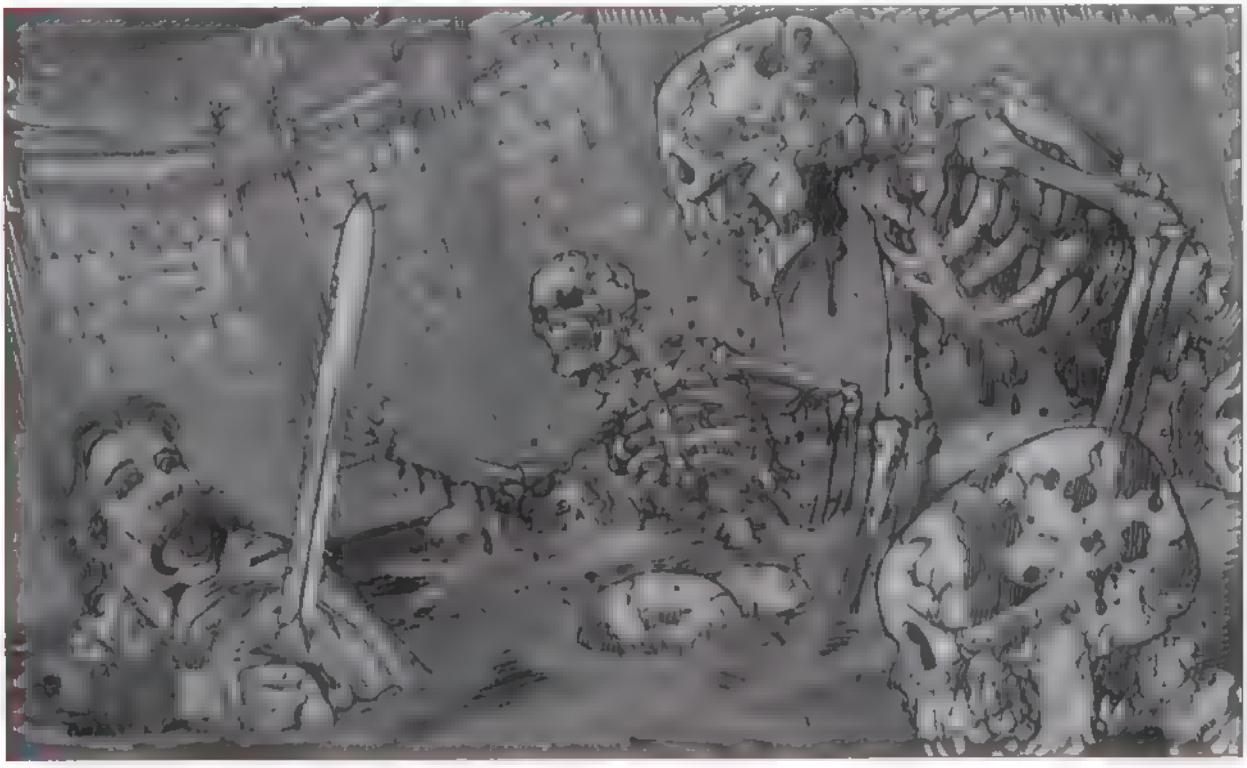
were drowned here. The bones of nearly 50 stone masons, carpenters, and artists now molder under the brackish water.

The skeletons—actually skeletal mummies—rise up from their watery tomb to seek vengeance against those who murdered them. Unfortunately, the skeletons are no longer able to distinguish one human from the next. They attack the PCs in a misplaced quest for justice. When this happens, read the following screened text to the players.

Suddenly, the surface of the water begins to move. Ripples form everywhere and tiny waves lap against the wall. Then a skull, green with algae, rises slowly from the water in front of you. Beside you, a skeletal hand breaks the surface. Behind you, another skeleton—water pouring from its gaping mouth—rises to block your path. All around you the water is alive with skeletal forms. They stare at you with empty eye sockets, then wade forward, bony hands grasping.

Skeletal mummies (6): THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4 (×2); AC 7; HD 4; hp 20 each; MV 12; SA fear, disease; SD silver or magical weapon needed to hit, edged weapons inflict half damage; MR immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and cold-based spells; SZ M (6′ tall); Int non (0); AL N; ML special; XP 240 each.

Characters viewing the mummies must save vs. spell or be paralyzed with fright for 1d4 + 1 rounds. If the save succeeds, the victim still must make a mild horror check, with a +2 bonus. A melee hit from one of these creatures also requires a successful save vs. petrification or the victim suffers from mummy rot, which is fatal in 1d6 months. Only magical means can cure the rot. While afflicted, the victim receives no benefit from healing spells, and wounds heal at one tenth of the normal rate. Because the PCs are fighting in deep water, they suffer a –2 penalty on their attack and damage rolls (unless they use magical means to move freely).



The door at the far end of the room is trapped. Opening it releases a rush of water that will flood the room in 3d4 rounds. At the same time, a metal plate slides across the bottom of the well shaft, sealing it. It remains sealed for 2d4 turns, at which point the trap resets itself. Kindly DMs may opt to have the skeletons break off their attack at this point; the skeletons wade down to the bottom of the well and hammer their bony fists against the plate that seals it, re-enacting the motions they went through when they were drowned in this trap.

Unless the PCs have the ability to breathe water, they face the prospect of drowning. The only escape involves finding a secret door at the end of the room nearest the well. If opened, the trapped door closes and the water drains out through the secret door, into a grill in the floor behind it. The PCs are then free to climb the stairs leading to Room 4. (When they return, they will find that the metal plate sealing the bottom of the well has opened.)

4) Zombie Lair: As the PCs approach this room, read the following description to the players.

> A foul odor like that of rotted flesh hangs thick in the air. The corridor ends in a circular room that is empty except for a pair of round, brown stones. Once again, you have the uncomfortable feeling of being watched, although the room is clearly empty.

These precious stones are tiger eye agates. Each has a dark stripe reminiscent of the pupil of a cat's eye. They are the keys to opening the ceiling trap door in Room 1. If the PCs try to obtain the stones from a distance (e.g., by using a piece of equipment to draw them out of the room), the stones roll away across the floor, always remaining just out of reach. As soon as a character enters the room and approaches the stones, read the following.

> As you reach for the stones, the feeling that you are being watched intensifies. Just as your hand is about to close on them, the stones rotate slightly until the dark line on each of them is facing you. Suddenly, you realize how much the stones resemble the eyes of a cat.
>
> Before you have time to react, the air shimmers. A foul graveyard stench assaults your nostrils. There, standing before you, is a mangy-looking tiger, its fur hanging in strips, its rotten flesh revealing pale white bones. The stones have become its eyes. With a strangled roar it leaps to the attack.

Zombie, Monster: THAC0 15; Dmg 4d4; AC 6; HD 6; hp 22; MV 9; SA nil; SD immune to poison; MR immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, death magic, and cold-based spells; SZ L (6′ long); Int non (0); AL N; ML special; XP 650.

Shattered Souls

In this room, Sachmet's *ka* was drawn from her mummified body and stored in a series of magical *canopic thought jars.*

The area is shown on **Map 8: The Silent Chambers**, found on the poster map. Entry is gained through a door at the top of a steep flight of stairs.

1) Meditation Chamber: This oddly shaped room is where the priestesses of Bast prayed and meditated before lowering Sachmet into the *soul coffin* that would remove her *ka* from her dead body. The priestesses left the room ready for reuse. They also left a fearsome guardian to protect it.

The door leading from this room to the next chamber is locked. Thieves attempting to pick the lock do so with a 20% penalty, due to the quality of the lock.

When the PCs enter the room, read the following passage to the players.

The door creaks slowly open. For a moment, the room remains dark. Then you hear a faint popping noise on either side of the doorway. Hidden in shadowy niches are two metal braziers. Something glows red inside each. The sweet smell of incense tickles your nostrils. Smoke curls up to the ceiling from the braziers, rapidly forming a cloud that hugs the ceiling. As you watch, it begins to take on a catlike shape. Sparks from one of the braziers race up toward the smoke and swirl there, forming two malevolent, glowing eyes.

Smoke Elemental: THAC0 17; #AT 1–4; Dmg 4d4 per hit; AC 3; HD 4; hp 16; MV 12; SA choking; SD +1 or better weapon needed to hit; MR immune to fire-based attacks; SZ M (4' tall); Int low (6); AL N; ML elite (14); XP 1,400.

See page 63 for more information on the smoke elemental. The braziers are made of bronze and stand on tripods with cat-shaped feet. Inside each one is a block of *incense of meditation*. (Priests who spend several hours in this room can gain the benefits of this magical item. The *incense* continues to burn until consumed; it cannot be extinguished and relit.)

2) Silent Room: When the PCs enter this room, read the following passage.

Dominating the center of this room is a large statue of a reclining cat. It rests on a dais surrounded by two low steps. Its head is slightly tilted, as if listening.

Something about the room is not right. An unnatural stillness hangs in the air. It is almost as if the room contained a palpable barrier of some kind

In fact, the room is absolutely silent, as if the priest spell *silence, 15' radius* had been expanded to fill the room and then made permanent. Characters inside the room are unable to make any sound or hear any noise.

The walls of this room are covered with hieroglyphs. If the PCs are able to decipher them, let them read **Inscription 3** (found on page 64). Stroking the statue (as if patting it) causes it to purr loudly and opens the secret trap door in Area 5.

3) Soul Coffin: Inside this room sits a glass, coffin-shaped box. Its clear lid has been sculpted to resemble a sarcophagus; one end is cast in relief, in the shape of a cat's head.

Here Sachmet's body was placed while her *ka* was withdrawn and transferred to *canopic thought jars*. (Observant characters might notice a faint smear of dried clay inside the coffin.)

The lid of the *soul coffin* can easily be opened. Any character laying down inside it will, once the lid is closed, lose some important memories. Those looking on from outside see the character suddenly stiffen and begin to shake. Then the character goes limp and loses consciousness. When removed from the glass coffin, the player should be informed of the character's lost memory. (A portion of the character's *ka* has been removed.) The DM should take that player aside and read the following description.

The glass lid closes with a click. Your friends look down at you, their faces distorted by the thick glass. You nod to them to show that all is well. Then an ominous whispering sound begins.

Suddenly, a bolt of blinding pain rips through your skull. Whirling clouds of sparks crowd out your vision, and your skin feels first hot, then cold. Before you can cry out, blackness rushes down upon you.

You awaken, looking up into the faces of strangers. Who are these people? In vain, you try to remember whether you came alone to this dismal place. But try as you will, there is only emptiness where faces and names should be. Although there are people within arm's reach, just beyond the glass, you suddenly feel very, very alone. You wish there was someone you knew here to comfort you, like your friend—like . . . you don't remember.

The character has lost all memories of anyone he or she ever interacted with. Friends, family, casual acquaintances—all of their faces and names have been magically drawn from the character's mind and stored inside one of the *canopic thought jars* in Room 4.

4) Hall of Memories: This long hallway is hidden behind a secret door, and it contains a series of niches, each of which holds a magical *canopic thought jar*. These are fashioned in a manner similar to the *thought bottle* (see the *Tome of Magic*), except that they store not just a single memory or thought, but an entire portion of a character's *ka* (the portion of the soul that contains a person's mental vitality).

Canopic Thought Jars: Each of these vessels is about 6 inches tall and made of tinted glass, with a glass stopper in the shape of a cat's head. All will be empty, unless any of the characters have lain inside the soul coffin in Room 3. If memories have been drawn from a PC, they appear in the jars as swirls of white mist.

Recovering a memory is relatively simple—the character need only uncork the appropriate jar, let the mist drift from it, and inhale. The memories stored within the bottle rush back into that person's mind (knocking the character unconscious for 1d4 rounds unless a successful system shock roll is made).

Any character uncorking a *canopic thought jar* and inhaling its contents can acquire the memories it contains. But beware: Damage may result. Characters inhaling someone else's memories must make a successful system shock roll or lose 1d4 points of Wisdom. They have gained the memories (and possibly the abilities) contained in the jar, but at a cost—their own memories (of the same type) are destroyed.

Each *canopic thought jar* is designed to hold one type of memory. If PCs use the soul coffin more than once, the DM may use the following table to determine which memories are lost (roll 1d10):

	Tint of Glass	Type of Memory
1	Clear	Events that have occurred today
2	Blue	Friends, family, acquaintances
3	Green	Knowledge of homeland, racial customs
4	Red	Magical spells and abilities (priest or wizard)
5	Yellow	Mundane abilities (weapon and nonweapon proficiencies)
6	Purple	Personal history, motivations and goals
7	Orange	Language
8	Gray	World history and geography
9	Brown	Emotions and psionic abilities
10	Pink	Knowledge of physical world (e.g., flora and fauna, weather, etc.)

The *canopic thought jars* do not have the ability on their own to remove memories. They must be used in conjunction with the *soul coffin* (which is delicate and will break if moved).

Characters who have lost a portion of their *ka* react in a variety of ways. The preceding boxed text gives an example of how a character who lost memories of friends, family, and acquaintances might react with loneliness. Here are some other examples, which the DM can read to the players when their characters try to draw upon the missing memories.

Green jar: A feeling of loss sweeps over the you. "What manner of creature am I?" you ask. "Where am I from and who are my people?" You feel as if you are drifting without roots to anchor you. Even the thought of entering a social situation makes you uneasy; being around people who know the proper way to react makes you feel very spiteful and jealous.

Red jar: These people are staring at you expectantly, as if you ought to be able to do something. Do they really think you can work magic? Wizards and priests are terribly

powerful and important people, and you are small and insignificant. You are nothing but a weakling, as powerless as a child. Even the gods care nothing for you.

Yellow jar: What is this thing in your hand? It looks like a piece of equipment, but what are you supposed to do with it? You stare at it, trying to puzzle it out, but thinking only makes you more angry. Stupid thing! You'd like to take it and smash it apart.

Purple jar: Your companions all seem so purposeful, so driven. In comparison, you just float through life. You live in the moment, passively going where the flow takes you. At times, you wonder, "Who am I? Why am I here?" But when you try to remember your past, you find only a vague emptiness inside. You exist—and that is all.

Orange jar: The people around you are making strange noises with their mouths. They repeat these noises over and over again, then stand there waiting, as if you were supposed to respond in some way. Yet you are unable even to copy the noises, let alone understand them. Every sound they utter makes you more fearful and mistrustful.

Gray jar: You feel alien, unsure of your place in the world. What day is it? Where are you? You can no longer remember simple things, like the name of the city you last visited or the name of its ruler. It makes you feel foolish and insecure. Instead of making a fool of yourself by displaying your ignorance, it might be better just to keep your mouth shut.

Brown jar: Everything feels flat and lifeless. You have the feeling that things were different once, that you used to experience highs and lows. But now nothing prompts a reaction from you. Your best friend might die, or you might be showered in gold—either experience would feel the same, just . . . empty.

Pink jar: What is this wondrous thing at your feet? You have a name for it: "stone." But you've never seen one before. It's utterly amazing. And what are these creatures moving around? Another word comes: "people." They're fascinating. How do they work?

Everything seems new to you, somehow wondrous and fresh. You could go on looking, feeling, tasting, smelling, and listening to things forever, and still there would be more wonderful things to discover.

5) Trapped Stairway: The door leading to this stairway is locked. Thieves attempting to pick the lock do so with a 30% penalty, due to the quality of the lock.

If the characters succeeded in making the statue in Room 2 purr, a secret door stands open near the first bend of the stairs. It leads to the real stairway.

Otherwise, characters attempting to use the false stairs trigger a trap as soon as they have rounded the first bend. At this point, all of the stairs flip into a diagonal position, forming a slide trap. Razor-sharp blades spring out of the cracks between the stairs, inflicting a total of 5d4 damage upon characters as they slide down toward the dead end of the staircase.

Food of the Dead

The priestesses who prepared Sachmet's body for burial knew that it might be years—even centuries—before their goddess restored her to life. They were concerned that, when their high priestess awoke from the sleep of the dead, there might not be faithful followers around to tend to her needs and provide her with comforts. Thus, they stocked her tomb with a magical food and drink.

Had things gone as the priestesses planned, the goddess would have awakened Sachmet from the dead and restored her original, beautiful human form. The food and drink in

these rooms would have provided sustenance.

Due to the machinations of the priests of Set, however, Sachmet reawakened in undead form and has no need of food. But even though she can no longer enjoy the bounty these rooms have to offer, Sachmet is still drawn to them by her memories of how pleasurable it was to eat rich food and drink fine wine.

This area is shown on **Map 9: Hall of Pleasures**, found on the poster map.

The double doors leading to the hall are covered with low-relief carvings of cats and studded with gems. One door stands slightly ajar. From behind it comes the sound of gurgling liquid and a low droning that sounds a bit like purring. A faintly sour smell hangs in the air. If the characters look inside Room 1, read the following block of screened text to the players.

Slowly, the doors creak open, revealing a large room. Directly across from you, on a rectangular dais set against the far wall, is a statue of a reclining cat with its mouth open. A golden tube hangs above its head.

To either side of the dais are two fountains, each of which sends a steady trickle of liquid down and into a square pool. One of these liquids is clotted and white. From the rank smell, you guess must be soured cream. Small and mangy cats cluster around it, lapping up the foul-smelling liquid. The other fountain sprays a pale yellow liquid that smells a bit like vinegar.

Nearby lies a large lump of torn flesh. A swarm of cats with dirty, matted fur tears at it, obscuring its details. One of the cats plays with what looks like a human finger, tossing it into the air like a mouse. Flies swarm around the rotten-smelling meat, filling the air with the low droning noise that you had mistaken for purring.

This sight is cause for a horror check with a –2 penalty to the roll. After the PCs have had a few moments to react and begin to look around, read the following passage.

To the left and right, the wall bulges into a large niche. Each contains a wide, low planter, filled with plants that have long ago turned brown and brittle. Something is stirring in them, causing the leaves to rustle.

Directly in front of the altar, a large carpet and several cushions have been spread on the floor. All of these are thick with dust, their colors and patterns obscured.

A cat is hunched at the center of the rug, methodically clawing one of the cushions to bits. Sensing you at last, it pauses in its shredding to look up. With a shock of horror, you realize that the creature's skin and fur are just as shredded as the cushion it is sinking its claws into. Bones protrude through gaping holes in the withered flesh, and one of the cat's eyes is missing.

The cat bares broken, yellowed teeth and utters a low hiss. At that same moment, a chime sounds and dozens of cats, all of them in various stages of decomposition, turn to look malevolently at you, as if angered by the interruption of their ghastly feast.

The chime (the golden tube above the statue's head) is a *chime of hunger*. Any character hearing it must immediately make a saving throw vs. spell. Anyone who fails will immediately seek to satisfy a ravenous hunger. If the characters have no rations (or perhaps even if they do!), those affected by the *chime* rush to drink curdled cream or soured wine from the fountains, or even devour the rotten meat. (It is actually horse meat; the finger bone came from an earlier kill, one of the workers that Sachmet carried back here for her "children" to devour.)

Characters drinking from either fountain or eating the rotten horse meat must save vs. poison or suffer the effects of Type H poison (see the *DMG*).

Unless they are deliberately disturbed, the cats in this room ignore the PCs. If attacked, however, the cats fight back.

Zombie Monsters, Cat (16): THAC0 20; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 1–2; AC 6; HD 1–1; hp 4 each; MV 9; SA nil; SD immune to poison; MR immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, death magic, and cold-based spells; SZ S (1' long); Int non (0); AL N; ML special; XP 35 each.

The eastern niche also contains dead catnip plants. The zombie cats avoid these plants, which have been infested with a small swarm of red ants. The ants attack anyone who disturbs the planter.

Ant, Swarm (100): THAC0 special; Dmg 1d6; AC 10; HD less than 1/2; hp 1 per 10 ants; MV 6; SA poison; SD nil; MR nil; SZ T; Int animal (1); AL nil; ML Unsteady (6); XP 65.

The carpet pattern shows a cat-headed woman surrounded by happy, playful cats. The woman is holding a bunch of herbs, and is offering the leaves to the cats. Scattered among the cushions are a number of *faience* (fine glazed pottery) plates. Only one is intact. Hieroglyphics are painted around its rim. Translated, they read: "Eat to thy heart's content of that which pleasures you."

Plate of Plenty: This magical plate can instantaneously produce up to three meals per day. The person holding it merely needs to concentrate on the type of food he or she most desires. The food then appears on the *plate*. Eating this meal provides the benefits of the 6th-level priest spell *heroes' feast*.

Once, this room was a luxurious hall, intended to give pleasure to both cats (the cream and catnip) and humans (the wine and food). It was intended that Sachmet, once awakened by the goddess, should dine here with the cats, which the priestesses had placed in an adjoining room to be her companions. (This information is contained in hieroglyphs painted on the wall above the statue. See **Inscription 4.**)

The *staff of Set* changed all that. One of the snakes it drew to the tomb crawled into the open mouth of the statue, defiling it. As a result, everything in the room was polluted. Anyone reaching inside the hollow mouth of the cat will be bitten by the snake. Pouring liquid into the mouth will drive the snake out.

Snake, Poisonous: THAC0 19; Dmg 1; AC 6; HD 2+1; hp 10; MV 15; SA poison; SD nil; MR nil; SZ S (4' long); Int animal (1); AL N; ML avg (8); XP 175.

A secret door leads from this room to the corridors that lead to Sachmet's crypt. To open it, PCs must place catnip (from the planter) in the mouth of the statue (as suggested by the pattern in the carpet).

2) Cat Room: This room originally contained 18 *jars of preserving*, each with a living cat inside it. When the huge statue that houses the tomb was transported to Ravenloft, the ceiling partially collapsed, and most of the jars cracked. The cats trapped inside them began to slowly starve and die.

The goddess Bast tried to save her children, but her powers were muted by the fact that Sachmet's tomb now resides in the Demiplane of Dread. Instead of returning to life, the cats became zombies.

Two of the *jars of preserving* have survived, though. Each has a living cat inside it that will slowly awaken if removed from the jar. Each of these cats immediately imprints upon the person who removed it from the jar, purring loudly and rubbing against that character's leg.

Any character who shows kindness to the cats will receive a minor blessing from the goddess. (At the DM's discretion, this blessing might remove a minor curse or cause the character to reroll the next failed saving throw.)

A Mother's Wrath

During the PCs' exploration of the banquet hall, Sachmet launches yet another attack.

Sachmet (Sixth Awakening): THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10 (x2); AC 3; HD 7; hp 38; MV 12; SA magical items, spells, disease, dread; SD special, shape change; MR 10%; SZ M (5'6" tall); Int very (12); AL CE; ML elite (13); XP 4,000.

The timing of the attack should be dependent upon the PCs' actions. Sachmet might enter the room if the characters injure or kill any of the cats (zombie or normal), if they attempt to desecrate the contents of the room, or if they destroy the fountains or tear up the catnip.

Sachmet first takes control of any cats in the room, turning them on the PCs. She then sends in the second wave, consisting of any crypt cats she has with her. Sachmet herself stands in the main entrance to the room, casting spells.

By the time of her sixth awakening, Sachmet is a powerful foe. To even the odds, the DM can alter the description of the statue so that it contains a total of 13 poisonous snakes. These emerge, one by one, from the mouth of the statue, and advance upon Sachmet, driving her off as if she had been turned by a priest.

he will awake no more, oh never more!
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
The shadow of White Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling place

—Percy Bysshe Shelley

Sachmet's crypt lies deep within the giant statue. Reaching it involves getting past a number of guardians, traps, and other difficulties. The area is shown on **Map 10: The Inner Chambers**, found on the poster map.

1) The First Guardian: As the PCs enter this room, read the following screened passage.

The walls are alive with shifting cat-shaped shadows. It is as if the room were filled with cats running, leaping, and playing. Some of the shadows loom large, as if a cat is close to your light source. Others are smaller, as if the cats are closer to the walls.

Near the center of the room is a life-sized statue of a cat, carved of smoky crystal. After a moment it begins to shimmer and transform. The eyes blink, the fur fluffs, and the statue comes to life. An gray kitten looks up at you with wide eyes, meows sweetly, and steps forth to brush against your legs in greeting.

The kitten is a *figurine of wondrous power* that paralyzes the legs of anyone it brushes. The effect is not immediately apparent; it takes 2d4 rounds to set in. Once it has brushed against each of the PCs' legs, the kitten returns to its original spot and transforms back into a statue.

Thieves attempting to pick the locked door at the far end of the room do so with a 30% penalty, due to the quality of the lock. Any failure triggers an attack by the shadows.

Shadows (1d4): THAC0 17; Dmg 1d4+1; AC 7; HD 3+3; hp 13 each; MV 12; SA Strength drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, and cold-based attacks; SZ T (1' long); Int low (7); AL CE; ML Special; XP 650 each.

2) Heart of the Cat: This room is situated at that part of the gigantic statue where a cat's heart would lie. As the PCs enter, read the following.

As you walk up the corridor, you can see a round, open area ahead. Gradually, your ears begin to register a rapid thumping sound.

You emerge through an arched entrance, into a round room with several exits. The thumping noise is clearer now; it sounds like the hollow beating of a distant drum.

Suddenly you notice that you are starting to feel slightly dizzy and short of breath. Bringing a hand to your chest, you realize that your heartbeat has accelerated to match the pace of the thumping. Now your heart is racing, beating at nearly twice its normal rate.

You stagger and gasp for air. Then a drop of blood splatters on your forehead. Looking wildly around, you notice that the ceiling has begun to bleed. The faster your heart beats, the larger the drops of blood become.

The character's hearts have begun to beat at the same rate as that of a cat—at 110 to 140 beats per minute. Unless their heart rates can be restored to normal, the PCs will collapse within 2d4 + 9 rounds. The dripping blood continues to rain down until it fills the room to a depth of 6 inches, soaking the characters and possibly ruining some of their equipment. Should the characters leave this room and go back the way they came, their hearts continue to beat at a rapid pace until they reach Room 1, at which

time they gradually slow.

This room has nine doors. Eight are false; opening them reveals only a blank stone wall. To proceed farther into the tomb, the PCs must discover and open the only real door.

Opening a false door wastes a round. Each time the PCs open one, the DM should tell them that they feel their heartbeats speeding up still further.

Each of the doors is plated with silver and inlaid with the gold image of a cat. Each cat is shown performing a different activity. Eight of the images show a cat in an activity that increases its heart rate (leaping, walking, running, hunting a mouse, playing with a ball, climbing a tree, rolling on its back, and scratching a tree.) The ninth shows a cat sleeping, an activity that reduces the heart rate. This is the correct door to open. (*Note: characters passing through this room in the opposite direction do not suffer any ill effects, although they do hear the rapid heartbeat.*)

3) Inscription Room: The outer chamber of this room (3a) is covered in hieroglyphics. (For details, see **Inscription 5**, on page 64.) The inner chamber (3b) is a honeycomb of hundreds of diamond-shaped niches, each filled with sealed scrolls. At either end of the room is a high lectern, used for reading the scrolls. An unrolled scroll sits on one of the lecterns.

Characters passing through the archway in an attempt to enter the inner chamber will instantly be teleported (as the spell) back to the outer chamber. The only way for PCs to successfully pass through the arch and avoid being teleported back to their starting point is to get down on all fours and "walk" through like a cat.

The scrolls in the inner chamber are the records, written in hieroglyphics, of Sachmet's term of office as high priestess and her judgements. A number of them detail the various painful punishments to be meted out to those who injure or insult a cat. The unrolled scroll records the events of Sachmet's death. It begins in her handwriting, describing the transgressions of a man named Kematef, and describing in loving detail the tortures she plans to inflict upon him. It concludes, in different handwriting, with an account of Sachmet's death at Kematef's hands. (For details, see "Story Background," page 4.)

The secret exit from this room is hidden behind a hinged wall panel. (Observant PCs may notice a smear of clay on the floor in front of the panel.) It is activated by twisting the top of the lectern that holds the unrolled scroll.

4) Mist Cat: As the characters enter this area, read the following screened passage.

> The corridor ends abruptly in a dead end. As you tap against the walls, looking for a hidden door, a pale, cold mist rises from the floor. In a matter of moments, it is swirling about your knees. Inside the mist, which is so thick you can't see through it, something is moving. You feel something soft brush against your legs. You lash out with your foot to keep the creatures at bay, but encounter no solid form.
>
> After a moment or two, you notice that the mist is spiralling upward to form a ghostly shape in the air above your heads. Slowly, a giant mouth with long white fangs takes shape in the air. Gradually, a face forms behind it, as the whiskers, nose, eyes and ears coalesce.
>
> The mist cat blinks, focuses its eyes upon you, then speaks: "Seek you to enter the tomb of the high priestess? Perform the ritual cleansing or become my prey."

Priestesses of Bast ritually cleansed themselves by licking each hand, just as a cat would groom its paws. If the players pantomime any kind of "cat grooming," the mist cat will disappear, revealing the fact that the corridor continues to a set of double doors. If the PCs fail to comply with the cat's demand within two rounds, it asks which of them would like to be devoured first, then swallows that (or the nearest) PC whole. The character appears to dissolve into shreds of mist.

In fact, this entire encounter is an extremely

powerful illusion, imposing at a –4 penalty to a saving throw. Those who are not fooled by the illusion may watch their companions pause in the corridor, feel along a seemingly invisible wall, kick at invisible creatures on the floor, then talk to a "cat" that they can't see.

Characters "devoured" by the cat feel its fangs sinking into their spine, instantly snapping it. Believing themselves to be dead, they must roll for system shock or collapse to the floor, killed by their own terror. Those who succeed their rolls make a second saving throw against the illusion—this time with a +4 bonus.

5) Sachmet's Crypt: This walls of this large room are shaped to give the impression of the inside of a giant sarcophagus. The rounded ceiling is nearly 30 feet high, and has a series of hollows that replicate the contours of a human body. When the PCs open the double doors to this room, read the following passage.

The doors swing silently open to reveal a large, oddly shaped room with a high, contoured ceiling. The air smells of spice and dust.

There, just a few paces ahead, stands an immense bronze statue that has the body of a woman and the head of a cat. Although its eyes are half-closed in a feline smile, its hands reach out toward you, fingers curved like claws. Some distance behind it is a wide, low dais that is ringed with large stone statues of cats. These face the center of the platform and grip glass jars between their paws. At the center of the dais is a large sarcophagus, glinting with silver and gold. The lid is slightly open. Beyond the dais, in a rounded alcove, are hundreds of small black boxes. All are studded with twinkling gems. To either side of this alcove, stacked in neat piles, are treasures of every description. Priceless works of art, gilded furniture, jewelled weapons, fine tapestries, elaborate pieces of jewelry, and boxes that probably contain a fortune in gold and gems.

Suddenly, you hear a faint popping noise. A tiny green spark flares near one of the statues that ring the dais, then quickly fades.

Peering through the gloom, you feel your heart begin to pound with fright. There, resting on the rim of the sarcophagus, is an emaciated hand. The fingers twitch and tremble. Whatever lies within the sarcophagus is awakening. . . .

Sachmet's stone sarcophagus is covered with sheets of gold and silver, painted in brilliant pigments that have been mixed with ground gems, so they glitter. Each of the statues of large cats on the dais is an upright sarcophagus with a large crypt cat inside. They emerge through hinged backs on the statues.

Crypt Cats, Large (9). THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8; AC 7; HD 4+1; hp 17 each; MV 12; SA disease; SD nil; MR nil; SZ S (4' long); Int animal (1); AL CN; ML special; XP 650.

Each of the statues clutches a *canopic thought jar* like those described on page 49. Each jar holds one-ninth of Sachmet's *ka*, plus several important memories from her first, human life. Each time the mummy re-awakens here, the lids of the jars levitate, releasing the mistlike substance they contain. Sachmet then sits up in her sarcophagus and inhales the memories. Only then does she become fully awake.

Had the priests of Set not corrupted Sachmet's embalming process and defiled her tomb, the jars would have all opened at once upon her first awakening. Instead, one or more of them have failed to open each time she awakens, leaving her without key memories. But with each subsequent awakening, more of them function properly. This is why Sachmet gains powers with each re-awakening.

The dais on which the sarcophagus rests is protected by a magical *gem of force*, set into the lid of the sarcophagus. This gem extends a protective field of energy in a dome shape over the entire dais. It is similar to a *cube of force*, in creating four types of magical barriers. These

prevent gasses and winds, nonliving matter, living matter, and magic from approaching the sarcophagus. Magical spells cast at the dais explode in a shower of brilliant sparks, while any living or nonliving thing that enters the field spontaneously combusts. (The green spark the characters saw was an insect that flew into the field.) Sachmet and her crypt cats can pass back and forth through these barriers at will.

Characters who touch the force field receive a gentle warning: their hair and clothing burst into green flames for 1d6 points of damage per round. (This fire can be put out by conventional means.) Continuing to push one's way into the field results in 6d6 points of damage per attempt. Regardless of the amount of damage sustained, the character will be unable to enter.

If a *dispel magic* spell or *wand of negation* is used against the force field, it loses only one of its forms of magical barrier. The rest remain intact until similarly dispelled.

The statue near the entrance to the crypt is of cast bronze, and it stands nearly 20 feet tall. DMs should lead the PCs to believe the statue might be a golem. Certainly its heavily lidded eyes seem to be watching the PCs, and it has retractable claws that extend as soon as a character enters the room. In fact, the statue is inanimate. It will, however, *polymorph* any mortal who touches it into a plains cat.

The rounded area of the room that corresponds to the head of a sarcophagus contains hundreds of small wooden, cat-shaped coffins. Each is studded with 10d10 semiprecious stones. Several contain a small crypt cat. A handful of the sarcophagi are open and empty—they housed the crypt cats that have already been encountered by the PCs.

Crypt Cats (10d4): THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1–2 (×3); AC 7; HD 1+1; hp 7 each; MV 12; SA disease; SD nil; MR nil; SZ T (1' long); Int animal (1); AL CN; ML special; XP 120.

Sachmet was buried with a wealth of grave goods, both normal and magical. These include thousands of silver and gold coins, stored in ornately carved boxes made of valuable hardwoods, as well as dozens of precious gemstones. There are also fine art objects, including statues of cats carved from marble, crystal, ivory, and fragrant wood, or cast in gold and silver. There are also tables inlaid with colorful precious stones, silk-cushioned couches with feet carved to resemble cat paws, exquisite tapestries, jewelled daggers, translucent alabaster vases filled with fragrant perfumes, delicate feather fans, and even a brightly painted chariot sheathed in gold. Polished bronze boxes hold jewelry fit for a queen: brilliantly colored scarab brooches, pectoral necklaces, heavy gold earrings, finger rings set with precious stones carved in the shape of a cat's face, and jewelled sandals.

Among this vast treasure trove are a number of magical items that Sachmet makes use of, once she has gained enough intelligence. These include: a *ring of free action*, a *ring of human influence*, a *ring of sustenance* (Sachmet is unable to use this in undead form), a *ring of telekinesis*, a *rod of beguiling*, a *rod of smiting*, a *wand of Bast* (20 charges—similar to a *wand of polymorphing* except it turns victims into cats *only* when wielded by priests; wizards can use all the wand's normal powers), a *beaker of plentiful potions* (containing *potion of clairaudience*, *elixir of health*, *elixir of youth*, *philter of love*), four *bracelets of teleportation* (each acts as a *helm of teleportation* would), a *harp of charming*, a *scarab of protection* (7 charges), and a *wind fan*. Should the PCs survive to plunder the treasure, they should be allowed to claim no more than six magical items. And each will come with a curse (see "Sample Curses," page 60.)

Defeating the Mummy

The PCs have several rounds to react before Sachmet fully awakens. The DM should time the mummy's awakening to add maximum tension to the confrontation. As the players scramble to decide what to do, the denizens of the crypt awaken. First, the small crypt cats at the back of the room slide open the lids of

their wooden coffins. They crawl slowly forward in a wave, with lots of angry hissing and spitting. Next, the lids of the *canopic thought jars* open, and the puffs of mist that comprise Sachmet's *ka* begin to drift toward the sarcophagus. As these puffs of mist approach it, the mummy sits up and inhales them, one by one.

If the characters try to attack the mummy at this point, they are hindered by the *gem of force*. Additionally, any threatening moves on the part of the PCs cause the backs of the stone statues ringing the dais to slide open; the large crypt cats inside them emerge and attack.

After inhaling her *ka*, Sachmet is fully awake and able to join in the attack.

Sachmet (Seventh Awakening): THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10 (×2); AC 2; HD 8; hp 43; MV 12; SA magical items, spells, dread, disease, body control; SD special, shape change; MR 10%; SZ M (5′6″ tall); Int high (14); AL CE; ML champion (15); XP 5,000.

If the PCs kill her, Sachmet's *ba* flies from her body as before, into the sarcophagus. There, another undead body will form in 1d4 turns. The nine pieces of her *ka* will instantly reform in the *canopic thought jars* and the awakening process will begin again. (This will be Sachmet's eighth and final awakening.)

Sachmet (Eighth Awakening): THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 1d12 (×2); AC 1; HD 9; hp 49; MV 12; SA magical items, spells, dread, disease, body control; SD special, shape change; MR 10%; SZ M (5′6″ tall); Int exceptional (15); AL CE; ML fanatic (17); XP 7,000.

When Set's servant enters the crypt, he is immediately freed from the cycle of sleep and nightmares that have plagued the character. The servant also remembers the history of Sachmet and Kematef, (and may even believe that he *is* Kematef). The servant knows that the *staff* must be positioned against the exit of the crypt to seal the mummy inside.

Sachmet may be weakened by preventing her from inhaling the memories and *ka* stored in the *canopic thought jars*. One possible strategy would be for the PCs to somehow prevent her from inhaling the mistlike *ka* that contains her knowledge of magical spell use, or of language, without which she cannot cast spells. But if they destroy the *canopic thought jars*, the PCs risk accidentally inhaling one or more of her memories (and losing their own).

Sealing the Tomb

Sealing the tomb is a two-step process that involves using the *staff of Set*. First, the *staff* must be used to cast the 8th-level wizard spell *binding* (slumber) upon Sachmet. (The serpent staff must actually touch the mummy, and the proper command words must be spoken —the servant of Set remembers these words upon entering Sachmet's crypt.) Then, while Sachmet slumbers, she must be sealed inside her crypt by leaning the *staff* against its exit.

When the giant statue that housed Sachmet's tomb was intact, placing the *staff* against its only exit proved sufficient to seal her inside. While the *staff* was in place at the mouth of the cat, she could not awaken–the duration of the *binding* spell became permanent.

Now that the statue has broken open, offering Sachmet a variety of exits, it is necessary to seal her within her crypt itself. (It is possible to *bind* Sachmet in magical slumber and then carry her to her crypt, but those touching the mummy face the prospect of being infected with her rotting disease.)

Further Adventures

The Awakening concludes when Sachmet is sealed within her crypt. The PCs can then retrace their footsteps and exit the tomb.

But the PCs' adventures in the domain of Nova Vaasa need not end there. Below are listed a few loose ends that might be worked into subsequent adventures by the DM.

- Set's servant becomes possessed by the spirit of Kematef. (Treat Kematef as an odem.)

He or she returns to Kantora to set up an evil society, dedicated to the worship of the snake god. The PCs are enlisted in the battle against this dark cult.

- The PCs become involved in the political intrigue of the domain. The Rivtoff and the Vistin families each try to enlist their aid in a effort to capture the throne. Once the PCs have decided which family to side with, plans are drawn up for the murder of a member of the rival family on the "night of dark deeds."

Sample Curses

Anything in Sachmet's tomb carries a curse that is related to feline behavior. Generally, the strength of the curse varies with the power or value of the item. (Consult the *Realm of Terror* rule book in the RAVENLOFT *Campaign Setting* box for information on the strength of curses.) The theft of a few coins might result in an embarrassing curse, while more valuable objects might carry a frustrating curse. Only magical items and very valuable treasures carry troublesome curses. Unless a remove curse spell is cast, these curses cannot be removed until someone else has accepted the item as their property.

- The PC becomes terrified of all canines. The mere mention of a dog causes the PC to tremble, while the sight of a dog is cause for a fear check. Upon seeing a dog, the PC feels a compulsion to climb a tree or wall.
- The PC becomes fastidiously clean, always tidying his or her surroundings (even in a dungeon!) and spending much of each day washing and grooming.
- The PC develops an extreme dislike of even partial immersion in water. He or she will refuse to get wet, except under extreme duress.
- The PC develops a compulsion to chase small, quick-moving animals and objects. Spotting a mouse, bird, or rapidly moving string produces an irresistible urge to pounce.

CAT, CRYPT

	Normal	Large
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Crypt/tomb	Crypt/tomb
FREQUENCY:	Very rare	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Special	Special
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night	Night
DIET:	Nil	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	W (by group)	W (group)
ALIGNMENT:	CN	CN
NO. APPEARING:	1d12	1d8
ARMOR CLASS:	7	7
MOVEMENT:	12	15
HIT DICE:	1 + 1	4 + 1
THAC0:	19	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1–2/1–2/1–2	1d4 × 2/1d8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Disease	Disease
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	T (1' long)	S (4' long)
MORALE:	Special	Special
XP VALUE:	120	650

Crypt cats are usually domestic cats that have been mummified by coating the corpse with a thin layer of clay that contains magical salves and oils. When dry, it is painted with brilliant colors in the pattern of the cat's fur. Often, copious amounts of gilt paint are used. When crypt cats are animated, they shed the hard clay covering. Their bodies are dry and shrunken, with mangy clumps of fur clinging to the hide. Their teeth are yellowed and broken, and their eyes are mere husks that rattle in gaping sockets. Lumps of dry clay cling to the little fur that remains.

Crypt cats rest in stone sarcophagi or wooden coffins that have been elaborately carved and painted. The decoration almost always involves cats at play in an afterlife filled with mice and birds. In some cases, the sarcophagus is painted to resemble the cat it houses

In many cases, crypt cats have been fitted with expensive pieces of jewelry. Some wear golden bells while others wear a tiny gold ring through their ear.

Combat: Crypt cats fight as domestic cats. They inflict little physical damage, but anyone struck by a crypt cat must successfully save vs. poison (once for each scratch or bite) or become diseased. This sickness manifests itself as a red inflammation around the site of the scratch or bite. The wound itself will never completely heal, even if magical curing is used upon it—1 point of damage will always remain unhealed until a *cure disease* or *heal* spell is cast upon it.

Crypt cats are immune to *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*, and death spells, and they are not harmed by poison.

Habitat: Crypt cats begin life as pampered pets or as sacred animals of a cat-worshiping cult. Their bodies are placed in tombs beside those of their owners or beside a priest or priestess of the cult, so that their spirits might accompany that person into the afterlife. They will fight until destroyed to defend this former master. They will also rise from their sarcophagi to defend their tomb against desecration or robbery.

Ecology: Crypt cats are normally found in burial chambers, often with nonmagical mummified cat remains. The composition of the clay that animates a crypt cat is unknown, although it is assumed that high-level necromancy spells are involved.

If buried with a master who has become an undead creature, crypt cats rise any time their master is active, unless ordered by the master to remain in the tomb.

It is possible (albeit rare) to find a crypt cat that has been removed from its tomb. Usually, opening the sarcophagus or coffin of a crypt cat is sufficient to wake it (90% chance). If a sarcophagus containing a crypt cat is removed from a tomb or crypt without first being opened, the chance that the crypt cat will awaken when the container is opened drops to 75%. If the lid is left off or the body removed from the container, the crypt cat will awaken within 1d4 hours.

Large Crypt Cat: Sometimes the bodies of larger felines are made into crypt cats. Two points of damage per wound will remain until their disease is magically cured. Alternatively, any species of feline can be used. See "Cats, Great," in the *Monstrous Manual*.

CAT, PLAINS

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate grasslands
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night
DIET:	Carnivorous
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi (2–4)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1d4
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	4 + 1
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d4/1d4/1d6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Leap, rear claws
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Move silently
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	Large (5' long)
MORALE:	Average (8–10)
XP VALUE:	420

Plains cats are large black felines with bobbed tails. The males have distinctive white tufts of hair at the ends of their ears.

When a plains cat roars, the sound is amazingly like that of a human scream. A female and her litter will hunt as a group, the mother using her roar-scream to startle prey into moving and giving away its location to her young.

Combat: Plains cats have a 90% chance of moving with absolute silence through the grasslands. They hunt at night, relying upon their black pelts to make them all but invisible.

A plains cat's first attack will be a sudden leap out of the darkness. Plains cats are capable of leaping 25 feet up or 30 feet ahead. If they strike successfully with both forepaws, they automatically rake with their rear claws for 1d4 points each. The plains cat's second and subsequent attacks will be with both forepaws and teeth.

Immature plains cats have 2 Hit Dice and can only leap half the distance of an adult. They also inflict half the damage of an adult.

Habitat: Plains cats make their dens in caves near grasslands. They live a solitary existence, and the only time more than one plains cat is encountered is when a female is out hunting with her offspring. Females can bear one to three offspring per litter (but in the perpetually warm domain of Nova Vaasa, they can bear two litters per year).

To find a mate, a plains cat emits a call that can be heard for several miles. If there is a response, a series of call-and-responses will be uttered. To the untrained ear, these roars sound like agonized screams.

Ecology: Plains cats are primarily found in the Ravenloft domain of Nova Vaasa, although a few range into the grasslands of neighboring Hazlan. They prey upon the wild herds of horses in Nova Vaasa, and occasionally upon human travelers foolish enough to pass through the grasslands at night.

Plains cats are most numerous in the southwestern corner of Nova Vaasa, where the foothills of the Balinok Mountains offer a number of caves they can use for dens. Plains cats are capable of traveling great distances while hunting, and so they can be found even on the eastern fringes of the domain.

The people of Nova Vaasa believe that the white ear tufts of the male plains cat are a potent charm for anyone about to embark on an endeavor where stealth and silence will be essential. Thieves often wear finger rings of braided plains cat hair as a good luck charm.

The fur of a plains cat is a rich, glossy black. A pelt will fetch a high price in the markets of Nova Vaasa. Items trimmed with plains cat fur have a cost that is out of the reach of a common citizen.

ELEMENTAL, SMOKE

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any smoke
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Smoke
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5–7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	4
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1–4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	See below
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+1 weapon or better to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See below
SIZE:	S (4' tall)
MORALE:	Elite (14)
XP VALUE:	1,400

Smoke elementals are hybrid creatures, a strange combination of the elements of Fire and Earth. These swirling clouds of hot soot, ash, and smoke are conjured from large amounts of nonmagical smoke. Sometimes this cloud contains glowing red sparks. It can assume any shape, but its edges tend to be hazy and ill-defined. If adopting a form with eyes, it will concentrate a cluster of soot and ash particles into swirling balls that resemble eyes, but this is for the sake of appearance only. A smoke elemental "sees" by sensing the lower temperatures of the creatures and objects around it.

Combat: Smoke elementals are unfettered by gravity. Because they have no solid form, they can slip through thin cracks and tiny holes, but they then must spend one round reforming into their chosen shape.

A smoke elemental attacks by engulfing an opponent's head. Once it has done this, the victim suffers 2d4 hit points of damage from heat, plus 2d4 hit points of damage from suffocation, per round. Victims choke to death as their lungs fill with hot smoke. A smoke elemental continues to engulf a single opponent until that victim is dead or unconscious. It then moves on to its next target. If a victim flees, the smoke elemental follows it, moving so that the victim's head remains inside the damaging cloud of smoke.

Smoke elementals have the unusual ability to divide themselves into four parts, each of which can act on its own initiative. These smaller clouds seek to enter a creature's lungs, where they inflict 1d4 points of damage each round. Once one of these smaller smoke elementals has lodged itself inside a creature's lungs, it remains there until its victim is unconscious or dead. Until then, it can only be removed by magical means (see below). Each of these tiny smoke elementals has 1 Hit Die.

Smoke elementals are immune to fire-based attacks, but they are vulnerable to cold-based attacks and suffer twice normal damage from them. They are also vulnerable to large gusts of wind, which do not harm the monsters, but can be successfully used to drive them away or keep them at bay. Because they are magical constructs, they can be magically *dispelled*.

Habitat: Smoke elementals are magical constructs whose constituents are drawn both from the Elemental Plane of Fire (heat) and the Elemental Plane of Earth (soot or ash). Although they are sentient, they have no form on any plane but the Prime Material and Ethereal Planes. They cannot be *banished* or *dismissed* back to a home plane, since they don't have one, but such spells will drive them from a victim's lungs.

Ecology: Smoke elementals are typically created by a team of three priests who simultaneously cast the magical spells *conjure fire elemental*, *conjure earth elemental*, and *combine*. They are often used by priests as magical guardians of temples, and they are typically created out of sweet-smelling incense smoke, although they can be formed from the smoke of mundane fires.

There have also been reports of tiny (1-HD) smoke elementals conjured from tobacco smoke, but most sages insist these reports are merely attempts by tobacconists to falsely attribute a magical cause to deaths that are caused by the tobacco smoke itself.

TOMB INSCRIPTIONS

INSCRIPTION 1: Walk softly, mortal, with head bowed. For thou hast entered the resting place of the high priestess of holy Bubastis. Wake not her *ba* through stealing that which lies within! Touch not her provisions, neither meat nor drink! Disturb not the sleep of the holy cats, lest the wrath of the goddess herself fall upon you.

When the time of pleasures is come, the goddess will restore full life to her priestess by rejoining *ka* and *ba* in one. So too will she raise all of the faithful from the sleep of death, unto a time of joy when every desire shall be satisfied. Pray for that day, and do nothing unclean in this holy place.

Now depart, mortal, and keep holy the mighty name of Bast.

But if thou art a servant of the goddess and thy intentions be true, and if thou hast just cause to enter this place, give to the cat that which she hungers for.

INSCRIPTION 2: Welcome, faithful servants, to the place where the bodies of the pious are prepared for dreamless sleep. Here shall they be encased in the preserving earth until such time as the goddess awakens and raises them unto her garden of eternal pleasures.

Here, under the watchful eyes of the children of Bast, shall ye mix oils, salves, and earth.

Here shall ye do what is needful to preserve the flesh, thus providing an eternal home for the *ba* that gives it motion and life. Observe carefully the rituals, and chant the sacred words, lest the *ba* fly from the body and be forever lost.

This done and thy secret tasks here fulfilled, restore to the cat that which is needful.

INSCRIPTION 3: Enter, faithful servants, unto the place where the *ka* is withdrawn from the flesh and placed into vessels of safekeeping. Here shall every thought be made as clear and imperishable as glass, until such time as the goddess breathes them, gently as dreams, back into the bodies of the faithful.

Here, under the listening ears of the children of Bast, shall ye place the body in the casket of dreams. Observe carefully the rituals, and chant the sacred words, lest the fragments of *ka* slip from the body like whispers on the wind and be forever lost.

This done and thy secret tasks here fulfilled, provide unto the cat that which she finds pleasurable.

INSCRIPTION 4: Welcome, Sachmet, to thy second life. Here thy faithful servants have placed everything which is pleasurable to the palate. Eat from the plates of plenty, drink from the restorative fountain. Surround thyself with the goddess' chosen children and enjoy this sacred bounty.

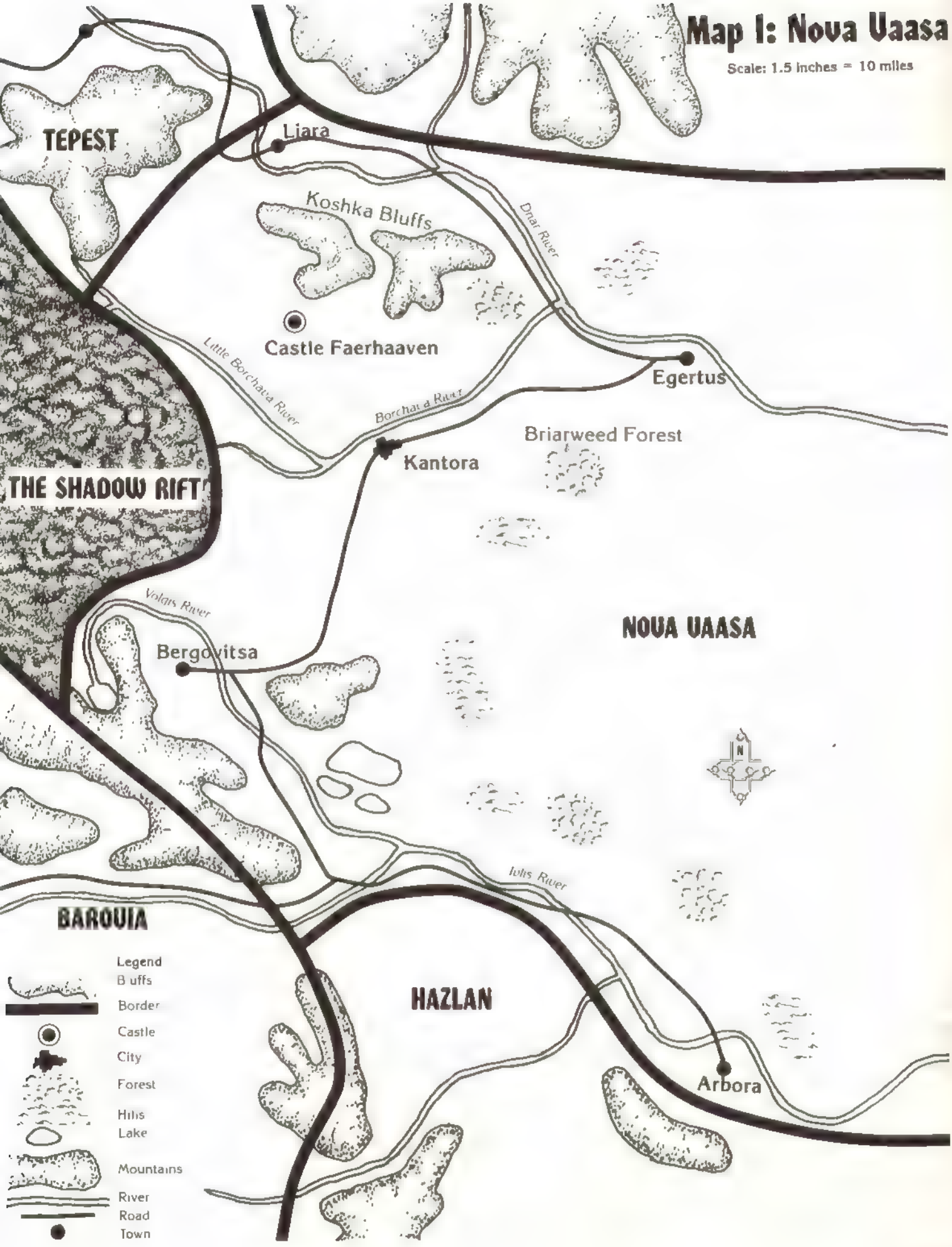
Should ye who are reading these words instead be a faithful servant of the goddess, come to lay another worthy in this tomb, then offer to the cat that which she craves.

INSCRIPTION 5: Arise, Sachmet, and take up the battle once more against the evil minions of Set. Lead the priestesses of Bast in their quest to sever the head of the serpent and free the citizens of Bubastis to follow the truest of callings—the pursuit of pleasure.

Gird thyself well for battle from the holy relics in your tomb. Assemble ye the children of Bast in an assault on our enemies. With those who have accompanied thee on thine long sleep, ye cannot fail. Fight with tooth and claw against those who took the first of the lives the goddess bestowed upon thee.

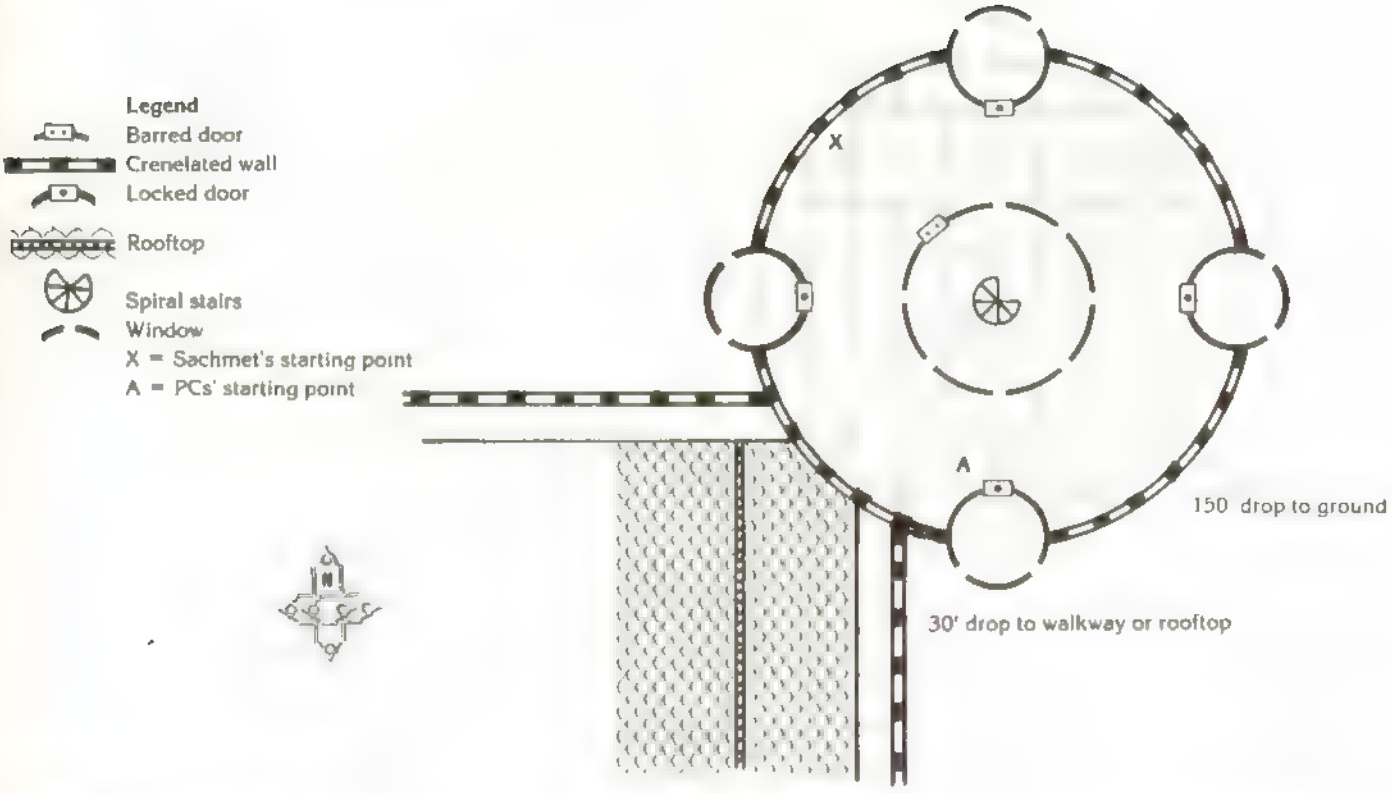
Go forth into the world, whole once more, and seek ye your pleasures. We await thee there.

Should ye who are reading these words instead be a faithful servant of the goddess, come to place another offering in the tomb of her high priestess, then assume the position of reverence and pass unhindered.


Map I: Nova Uaasa
Scale: 1.5 inches = 10 miles
TEPEST
Liara
Koshka Bluffs
Dnar River
Castle Faerhaaven
Little Borchava River
Borchava River
Egertus
Briarweed Forest
Kantora
THE SHADOW RIFT
Volgis River
Bergovitsa
NOUA UAASA
N
Ivlis River
BAROUIA
HAZLAN
Arbora
Legend
Buffs
Border
Castle
City
Forest
Hills
Lake
Mountains
River
Road
Town

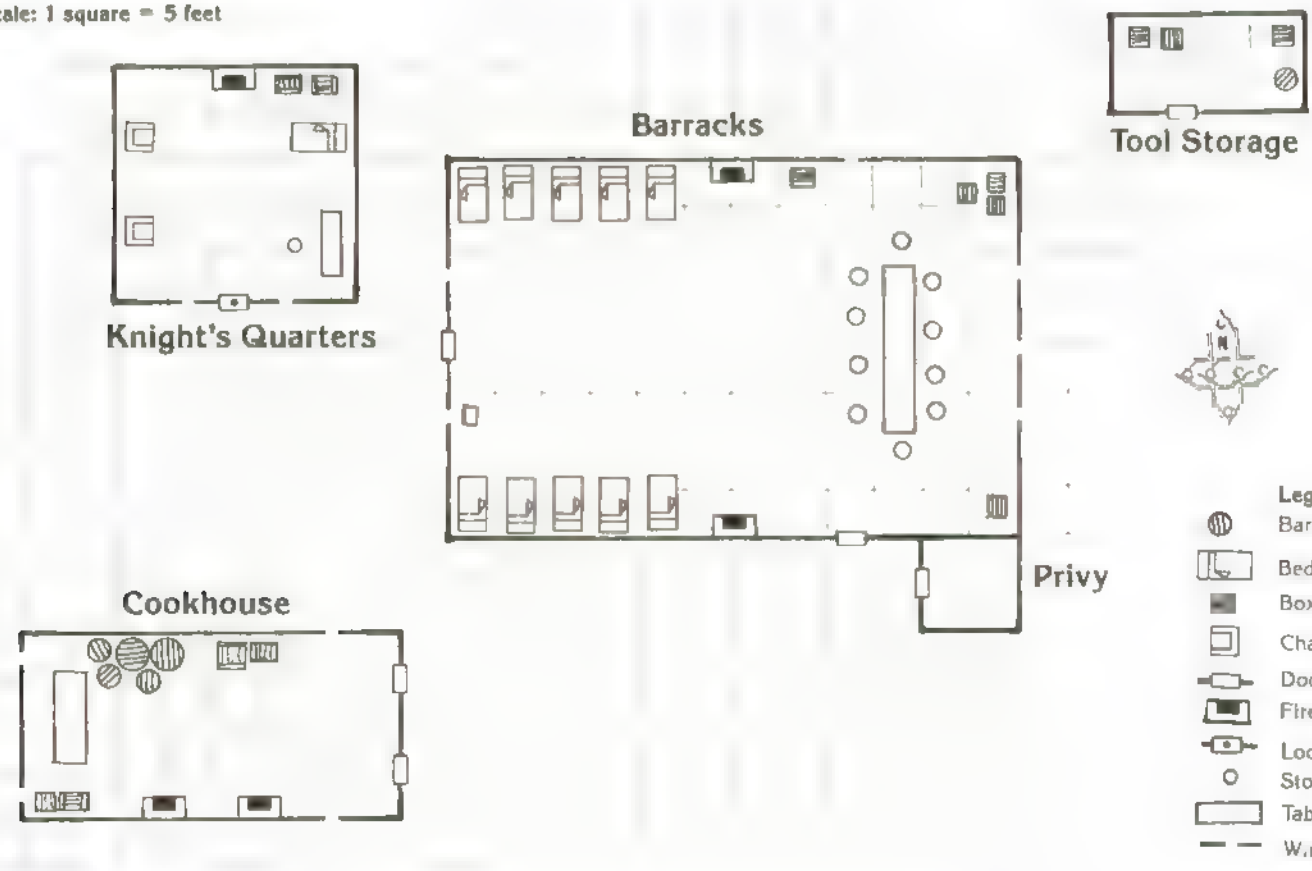
Map 2: Guards' Tower

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet

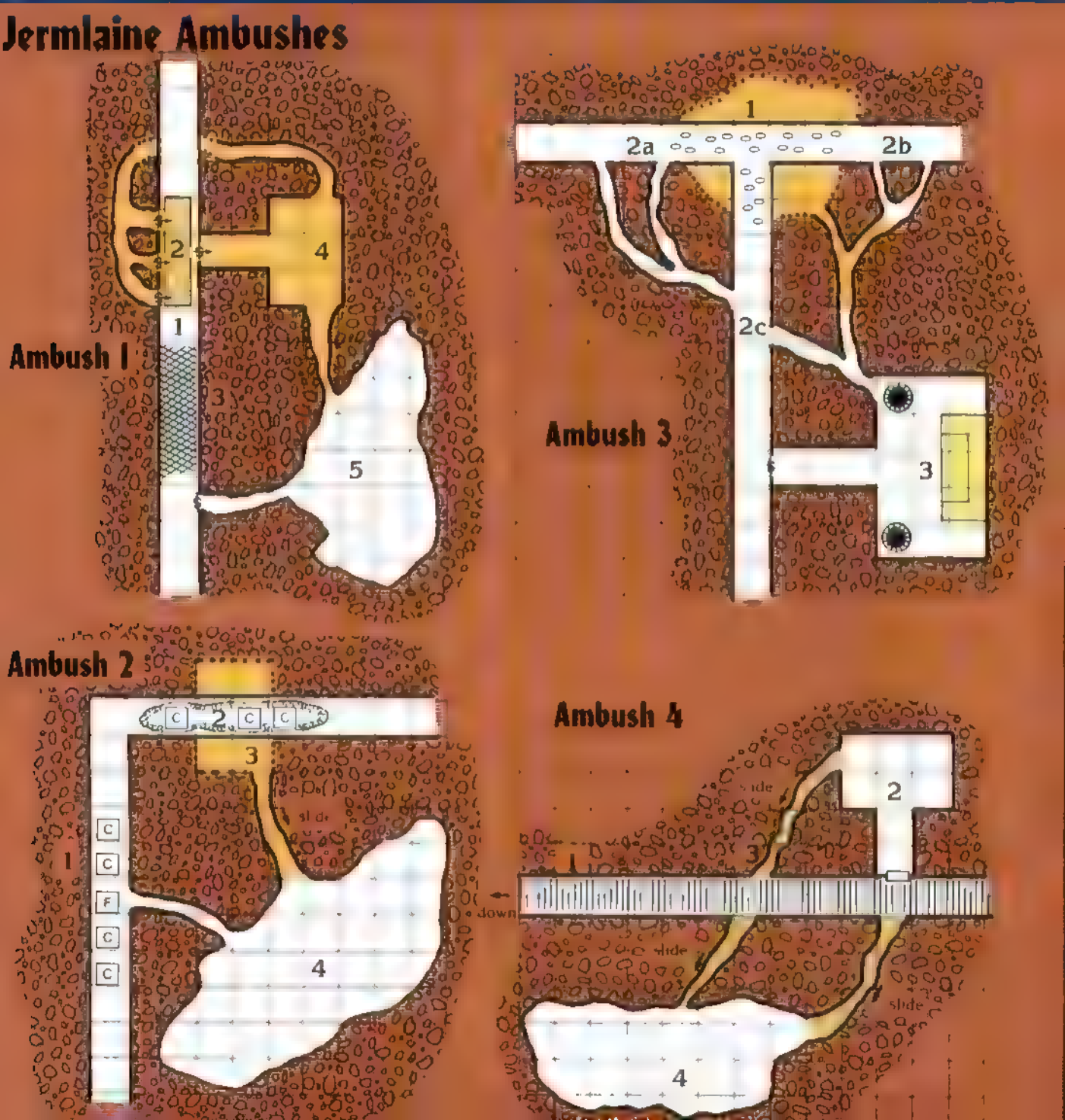


Map 4: Barracks

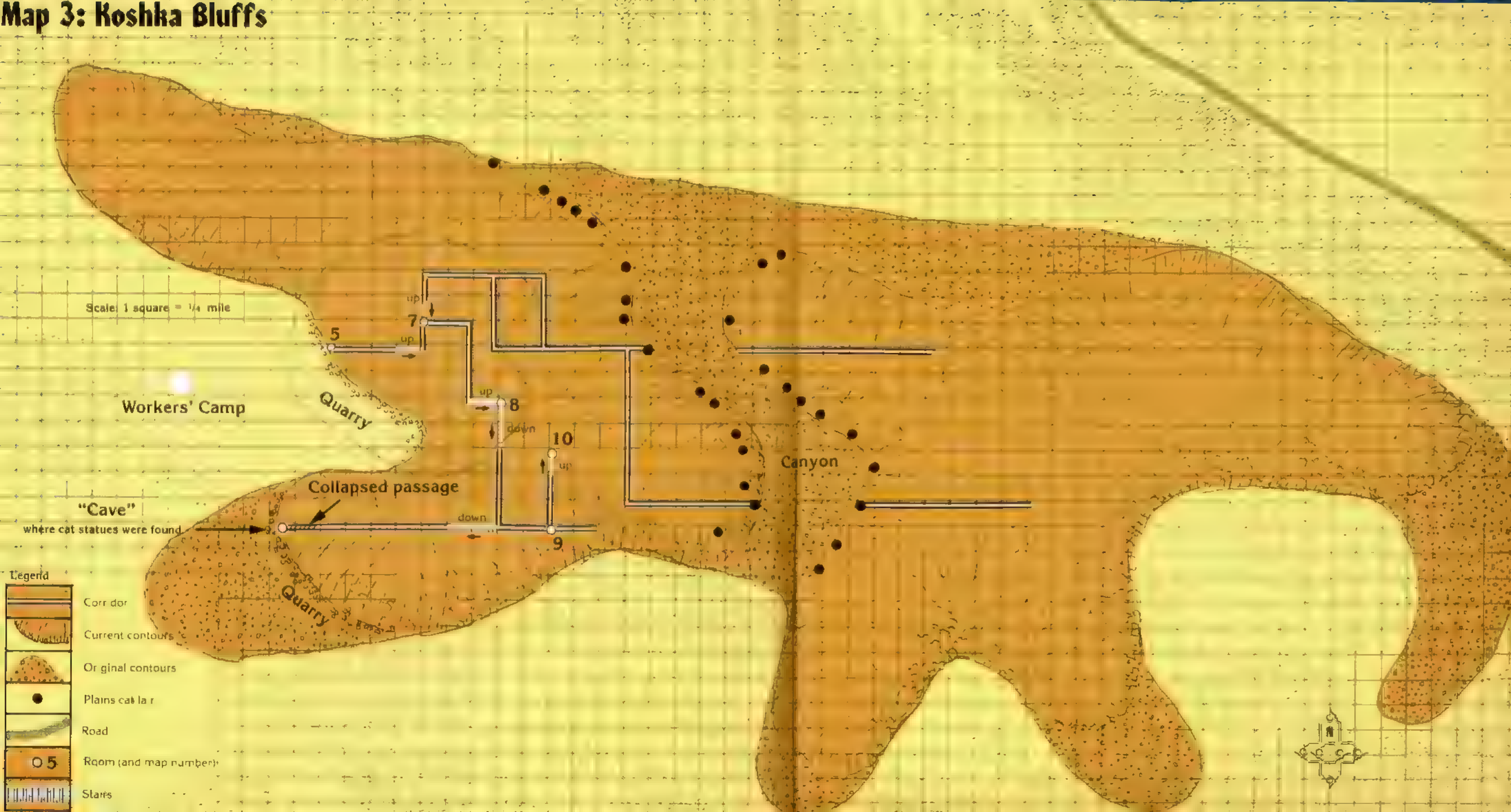
Scale: 1 square = 5 feet



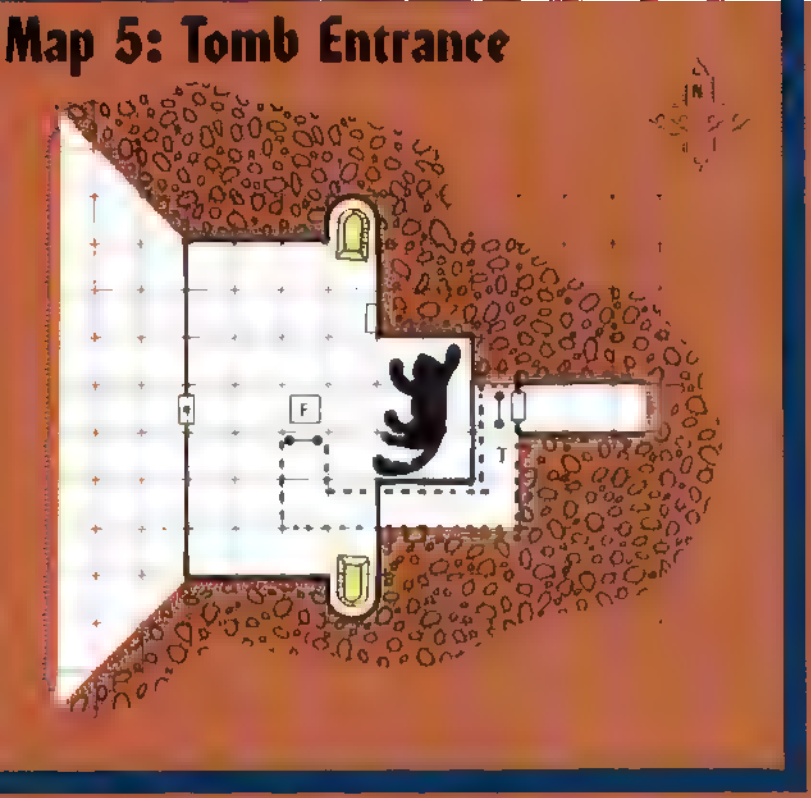
Jermlaine Ambushes

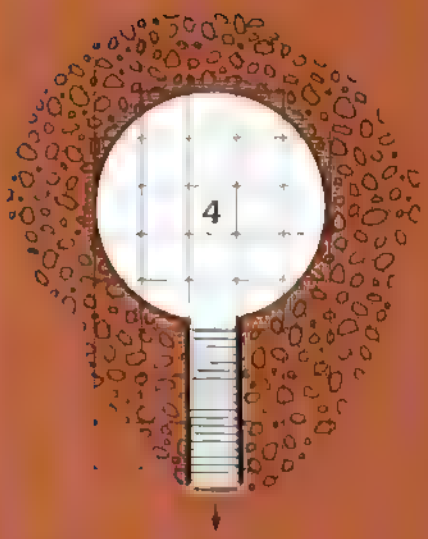


Map 3: Koshka Bluffs

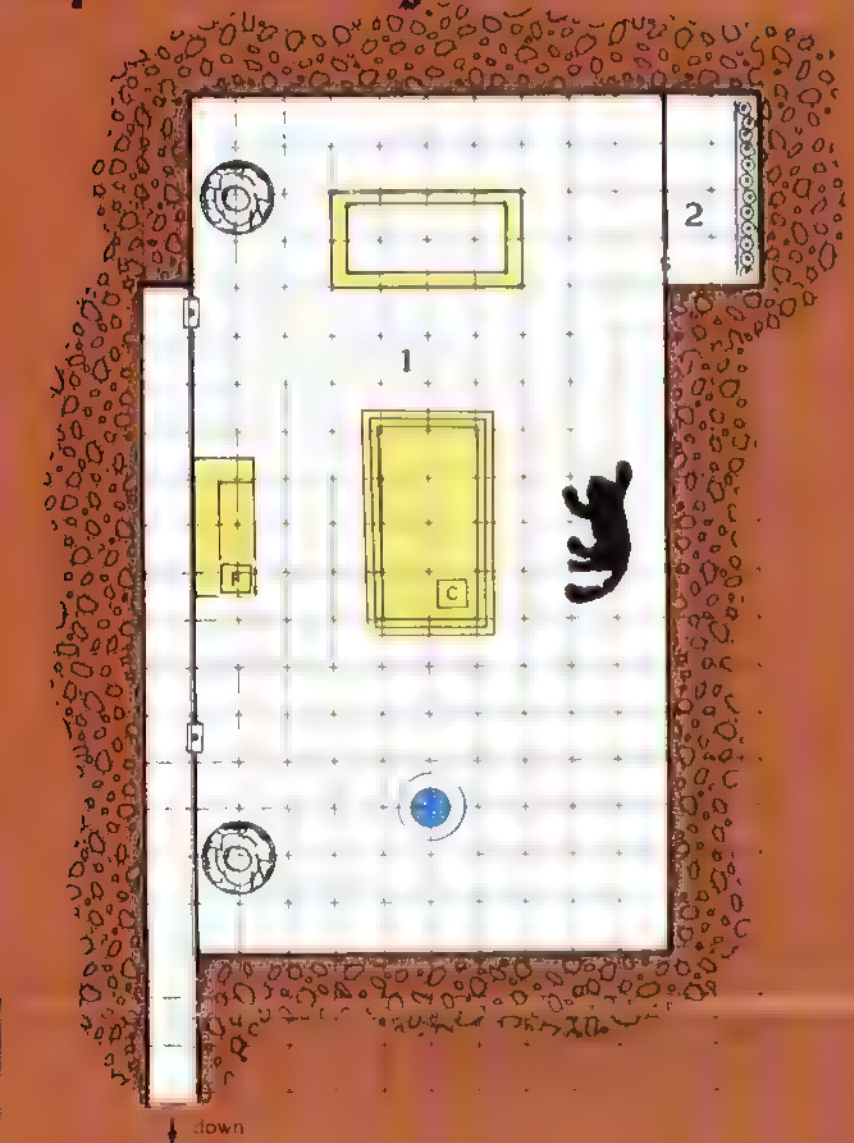


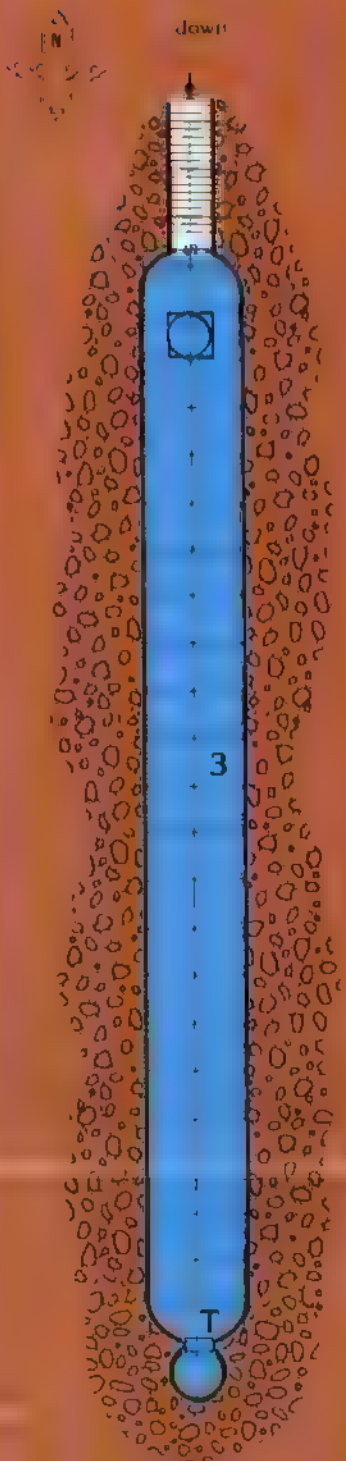
Map 5: Tomb Entrance



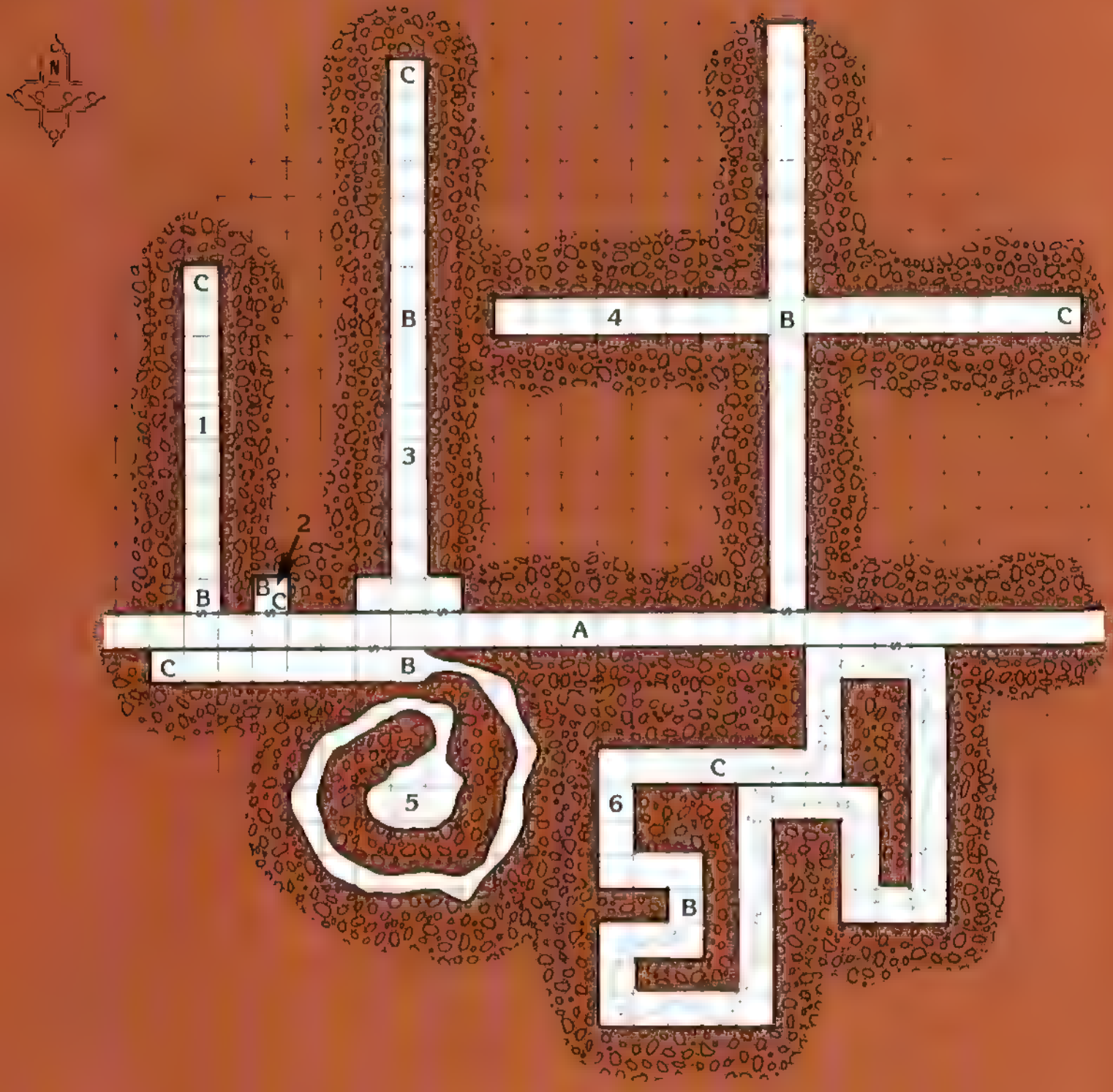


Map 7: Embalming Chambers



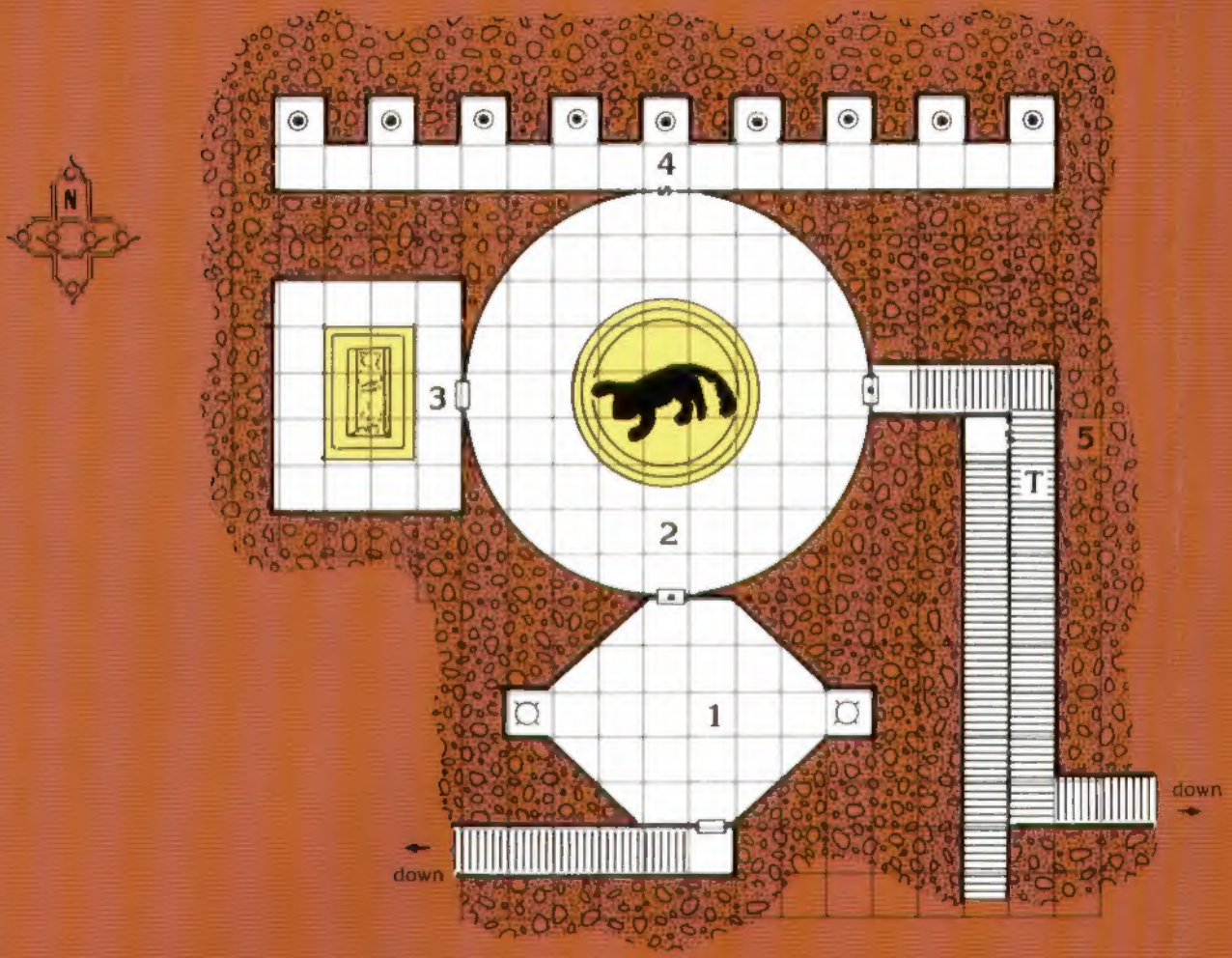


Map 6: Corridors of Isolation

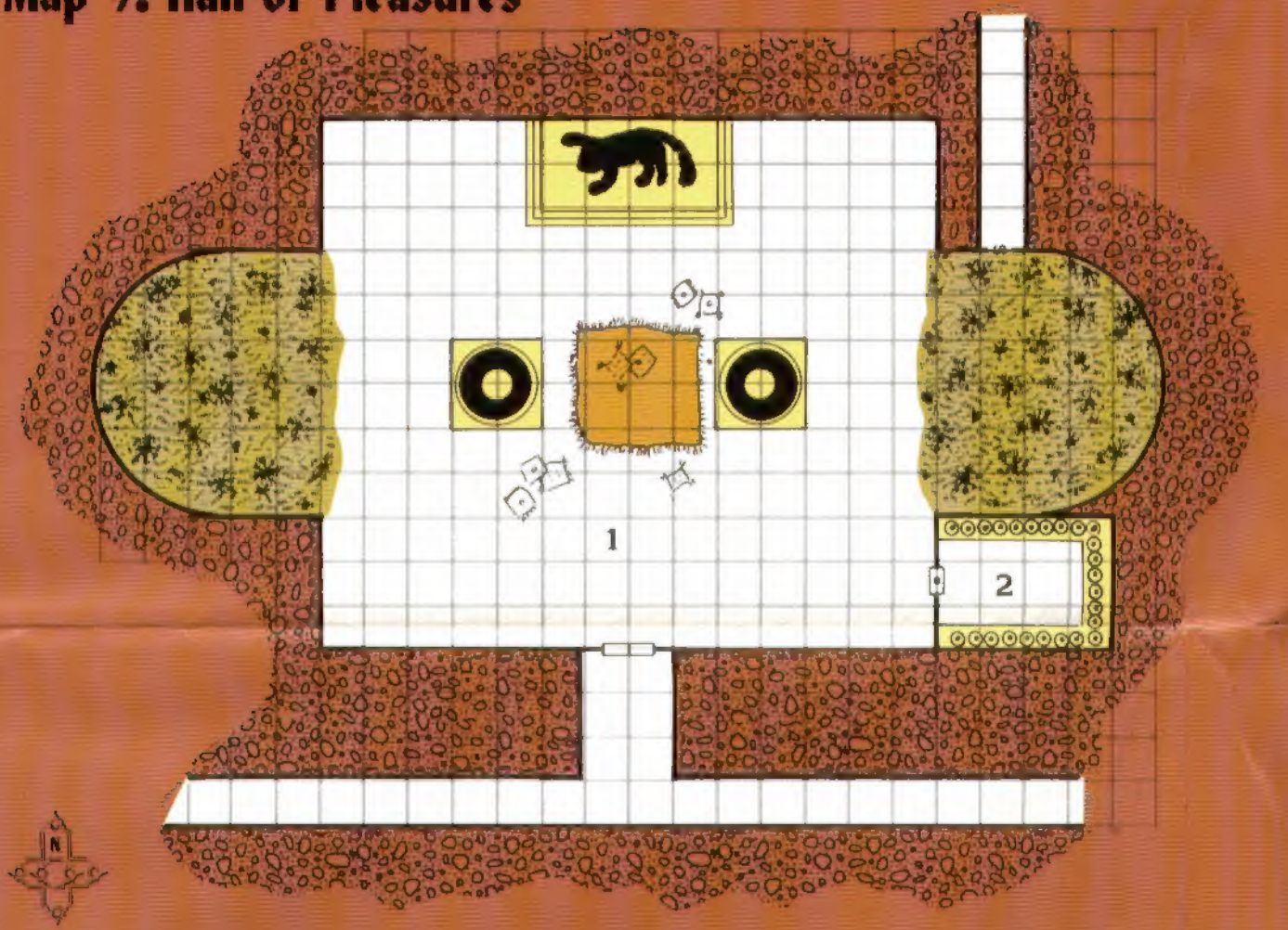


A = Party's starting point
B = Spot PC is teleported to
C = Sachmet's starting point

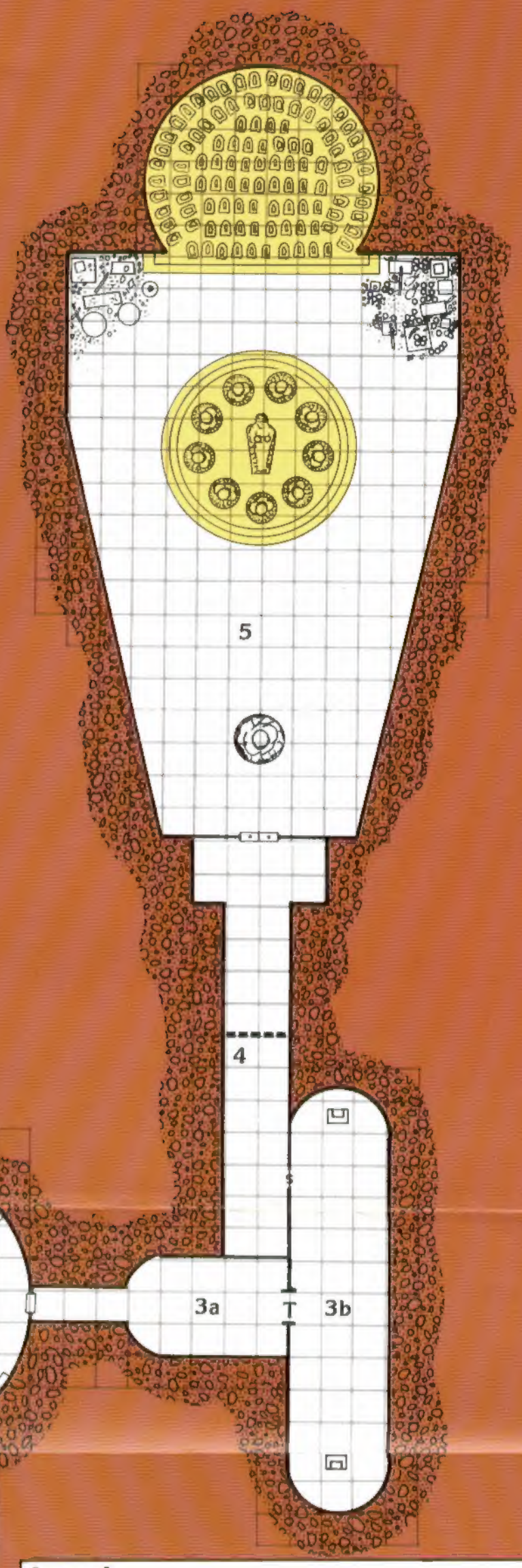
Map 8: The Silent Chambers



Map 9: Hall of Pleasures



Map 10: The Inner Chambers



Legend

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet

Altar	Lectern
Archway	Locked door
Bottom of well	Net
Brazier	Passage/room on other level
Carpet	Paw prints
Cat sarcophagus	Pillar
Cushion	Sachmet's sarcophagus
Dais	Secret door
Dead plants	Secret door in ceiling
Door	Secret door in floor
Double door	Secret one-way door
Down/slide	Soul coffin
Embalming tray	Stairs
False door	Statue
Fountain	Statue of reclining cat
Holes in floor	Trap
Illusionary wall	Trip wire
Jars	Water
Ladder	Well

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Now, the ancient priestess Sachmet has awakened from a timeless sleep to come and take them back. . . .

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